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FRANKIE PARKER DAVIS.

KENTUCKY FOLKS

AND SOME OTHERS.



BY _____

FRANKIE PARKER DAVIS.



1900

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KENTUCKY FOLKS AND SOME OTHERS.

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DEDICATORY.

TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY DARLING MOTHER,
MRS MARY HOWARD PARKER,
THIS VOLUME IS
DEDICATED.

NOTE:—The above is, I believe, what Mrs. Davis would have written for this page. I know I have named the person to whom she would have dedicated the book; for no mother was ever more fondly loved, or more tenderly cared for in old age than was she by her youngest child, the author of these productions; nor was ever child more completely idolized, and each was worthy of the affection bestowed.

H. W. D.

The stories and poems here presented were written as a means of expressing the thoughts and feelings and the delineations of character and phases of life that presented themselves to the mind of the writer and would not down till committed to paper.

Had she lived, she would have revised, and, doubtless, improved them, before allowing them to appear in book form; but feeling that no other person could do this in the way she would have done it, I have thought best to let them appear just as she left them.

They are now given to the public with the hope that they will furnish entertainment, elevating, pure and wholesome.

H. W. D.

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KENTUCKY FOLKS
AND
SOME OTHERS.

ONLY A TIE.

CHAPTER I.

“The tie so firmly bound,
Is torn asunder now;
How deep that sudden wrench may wound
It recks not to avow.”

The season of blossoms had lingered in all its blushing beauty and fragrance, and now it was slowly “passing out the gates of May.” The warm south wind’s breath had long since come on the wings of the golden sunshine and stolen silently up the sloping sides of the Cumberland Mountains. It had kissed the violets and they had awakened from their winter’s sleep. The icy fetters of the turbid mountain streams had melted away, and on their moss-fringed margins, golden-crowned dandelions sprang into life and beauty. Star-eyed daisies, forgetful that the wooing breath of spring is sometimes treacherous, ventured forth and unfolded their snowy petals. The perfume of the May-flower, grape vine, crab-apple blossoms, and the trailing arbutus lingered in the air and was borne by the rambling zephyr over hill and dale. The grand laurel grew upon the lofty mountain heights and in its branches sang the birds, allured thither by the approach of summer; or, in the cedar boughs they formed an orchestra, in which were mingled the joyous song of the mocking bird, the

full, fresh notes of the thrush and the shrill whistle of the cardinal grosbeak, while from the dusky distance came distinctly clear the pathetic wail of the whip-poor-will, and all commingling made the rock-ribbed mountains echo with melody. Deep gorges, not unlike the canons of the far West, lay between precipitous mountains, and not infrequently a wild cat or a panther was found lurking among the cliffs and caverns.

To add to the weirdness of the scene, the low, sad music of the pines reverberated like a mournful chant over departed hopes.

Down in the valley, nestling close to the banks of the Cumberland river, lay the booming mountain town of Plantville. This young city, with its numerous church spires gleaming in the sunlight, its splendid system of waterworks, electric lights, and all modern improvements, had sprung up as by the touch of the magician's wand, and, like a diamond set in emeralds, it lay surrounded on all sides by towering mountains.

The country around Plantville was a rugged part of the State, inhabited by a class of people whose manners and customs were in keeping with the general character of their native land. They cultivated such things as their small farms on the mountain sides would produce. They raised chickens and vegetables and by means of small marketing managed to eke out a miserable existence at best. They were honest in their way, but firm believers in natural liberty, unhampered by the restrictions of law and were strongly set on the opinion that a man had a right to make and sell what he pleased; and this opinion, practically applied, not unfrequently resulted in the rout or apprehension of some illicit distiller of death's beverage, better known as "mountain dew."

Eastern capitalists had found this remote mountain town, and ere long, the great iron horse, with its shrill whistle, was awakening echoes from the mountain side and valleys. Treasures from depths were unearthed, rich ore found, mines put into operation and in a short time a steady flow of emigration poured into the valley, and Plantville was aroused from her lethargic existence into a booming town.

It was when Plantville was in the zenith of its glory that Senator Carlton, of New York, a capitalist deeply interested in the future of this thriving town, sent out his son, a youth of eighteen, as his agent. Hope Carlton was the only child of doting parents, and this separation was a great trial to both father and mother. But he had never been very strong and they believed the change from the city to the pure mountain air would bring him back to them robust and vigorous. Believing this, they were willing to undergo any deprivation to see their idol restored.

It was a bright morning, and the sun shone with dazzling splendor, as if heralding with joy the approaching month of roses. On the side of one of the less precipitous mountains stood a primitive log cabin with a little farm extending in the rear. The vine-clad porch and blooming roses told of culture and refinement.

Charity Parton had put the finishing touches to the arrangement of their little domicile and now she stood in the doorway 'neath the clambering vines. She was studying the landscape that spread out before her admiring eyes in a picture of more exquisite coloring than any artist could have given it. Far below, lay the youthful city so full of busy life; beyond, at the mountain's base, winding in and out like a liquid band of silver,

rolled the Cumberland river, and nearer, the great engine with its long train of heavily laden cars steamed onward; while over the river, over the mountains, hung the great cloud of mist, seeming at times to almost envelope Plantville in its folds.

But the mist was melting away before the sun's ardent rays and ere long would be a thing of the past, only to gather again and hang like a mantle over the mountain peaks on the following morning. So often had she watched this cloud of mist that it seemed interwoven in her life. So often had she seen it come and go, sometimes rosy with the morning sun, then silvery like a bridal veil, and again dark and lowering. So many fancies had she interwoven with this cloud that it seemed to her a story. She was wholly unconscious, this mountain girl, "worshiping nature through nature's God," of the artistic picture she was making, and her voice burst out in the wildest, most joyous melody.

Hope Carlton, who had been out for a morning ramble, stood at the gate enjoying in all its loveliness the picture framed in such a net-work of beauty. The same voice he had heard echoing among the rocks and hills in his prospecting tours. Sometimes it seemed so near, then again far away and so soft and sweet. But when this outburst of melody greeted him in the words he had listened to so often, he knew that the voice he had learned to love and this were one and the same. "My mountain sprite, at last," he thought; "and how lovely! She is as beautiful as the voice that has haunted my night and day dreams."

But her quick ear had caught the click of the gate-latch, and the song died on her lips as she saw a stranger standing before her. A tall, fair-faced, sunny-haired

youth it was whose laughing, blue eyes greeted her as he deferentially raised his hat and said :

“Whom have I the honor of meeting? The goddess of the mountain mists, or the weird mountain nymph, who by her siren voice casts a spell over all who come within its sound?”

“Neither, sir! I am simply Charity Parton, the mountain girl, as the new-comers call me in Plantville. And you are—?”

“Hope Carlton, one of the ‘boomers,’ you might say, of that same town,” he laughingly replied. “I called to get a drink of water, and, with your permission, will rest awhile. I am not very athletic, having lived all my life in the city, and it will take me sometime to get used to roughing it.”

“Oh, certainly; come in and rest as long as you like. We are not often honored by so distinguished a visitor, especially a ‘boomer;’” and she laughed at the idea of that delicate form and effeminate face being characterized as a “boomer.” “I will go at once,” she said, “and not keep you waiting. Our spring water is very cool, and, perhaps, will refresh you.”

She went for the water and, on returning, found that the stranger had thrown himself down on a rustic seat and was enjoying the freshness and balminess of the morning. He arose, and, taking the proffered gourd, which he handled with care, having never seen anything so quaint, drank the cooling beverage; but no prince, in fairy stories, sipping the nectar of the gods from a golden goblet, ever felt so highly favored as this young New Yorker in his romantic surroundings, and no society belle had ever thrilled him as did this simple mountain girl. Thanking her he said:

"It is so delightful here, I do not wonder that you sing so joyous and free."

"Do you really like our home?" she asked. "I think it is the sweetest place on earth, if only sorrow had never drooped her wings over us."

"Then you have known sorrow."

"My mother—I have no mother," and her eyes filled with tears. "Do you see the marble yonder?" and she pointed towards a small enclosure. "My mother sleeps there. We are all alone now, my father and myself."

"You have lonely hours sometimes then?"

"Yes, very often, but I go to my mother's grave and she does not seem far away."

"Will you allow me to come and join you in your walks to that sacred spot? Perhaps we could cheer each other. I am away from my mother, too."

"Oh! I would enjoy and appreciate your calls very much if you think I could make it pleasant for you."

"I assure you it will be a very sweet rest for me, away from my business cares," and he arose to go.

"I fear you are not sufficiently rested to make the descent," she said. "The nearer way is very steep."

"Thank you, I am much refreshed and am provided with a staff, so I presume I will make it in safety, unless I am again charmed by a siren's voice."

He bade her adieu and went on his way bearing her image in his heart, while she returned to her work with a love-song on her lips that echoed and re-echoed throughout the humble cot.

Charity Parton was very beautiful, with her dark, gypsyish face, rich olive complexion, and purplish-black hair that clustered in curls about her face and hung below her waist. Her eyes were very dark with a world

of expression in their liquid depths, and her cheeks were of a rich carmine tint. She was educated, too, far above those by whom she was surrounded. Her mother and father were Virginians by birth, and had once been very prosperous, but a stroke of adversity had come, and with it they came to Kentucky; and, finding land cheap, they bought a small farm and settled where we find them. Mrs. Parton's health was very delicate, and they hoped a few years residence in this healthful region would restore her. Their hopes were realized for awhile, but, as the years went by, she began to decline, and, with deep grief, Charity and her father knew that their loved one was passing away. She was spared long enough, however, to instill her own noble principles into her daughter's heart, and to see her educated by her own teaching, and ripening into beautiful womanhood. Then with her dying blessing lingering on her lips, one hand clasped in that of her husband, the other resting on Charity's head, she sank sweetly to sleep. They laid her to rest on the mountain side, and the bereaved ones returned to their desolate home, feeling that one link of their life was broken.

Reverses and death had chilled Mr. Parton's hopes and aspirations. Their life, so different here from the life he had known in Virginia, seemed now to fully satisfy him. But with Charity it was different. She was young; life had some claims on her, and often she stood wondering about the great world beyond the long line of blue hills.

But Hope Carlton's coming had awakened new hopes, new dreams. True to his promise, he came again and often, and love wove golden threads in the web of their lives and sang happy songs in their hearts. This

was Hope's first love, and no thought of deceiving Charity Parton ever entered his mind. He was eighteen, she only sixteen—so young, too, to have learned the sweet and bitter lesson of love's young dream. Month's had sped on, and the two lovers lived only in each other's presence. It was heaven to be united, death to be parted. They had plighted their troth and were soon to be united in marriage. But one thing now prevented their perfect happiness, and Hope pondered day and night over what would be the best course to pursue. His mother was a proud, strong-willed woman. He had never gone against that iron will in all his life, and he very well knew that it would be death to his hopes should she know of his approaching marriage. If Charity knew of his mother's great opposition to his marriage with a poor girl she would die sooner than marry him, for she, too, was proud and would enter no family in which she would not be received on equal footing, as a daughter. What was he to do? Here was a dilemma, either horn of which he took would be fatal to his desires. If his mother knew it, he would lose Charity, and he could not explain to Charity, for by so doing he would be doubly sure to lose her, so in anguish of spirit he resolved to be true to himself and to her whom he loved. So they were quietly married, Mr. Parton giving them his sanction and blessing.

Oh! the days and months of happiness in that peaceful mountain home. Together they wandered over hill and dale. Together they read and dreamed bright dreams of the future. Charity always met her young husband far down the mountain path, and, with her arm linked in his, together they would slowly wend their way homeward. A year of perfect happiness had gone

by and not a cloud had dawned upon their horizon, and now their cup was filled to the brim and running over with happiness. A little girl babe nestled in Charity's arms, with Hope's eyes, Hope's mouth and his sunny hair.

"We will call her Lourline, that was my mother's name," said Charity. So little Lourline, as she grew in beauty became the queen of the household. Mr. Parton, even, seemed to awake from his listless state into new hopefulness and cheer, for the sake of his bright little granddaughter.

Almost two years had gone by since Hope Carlton had left New York, and only once had he been home since he came to Plantville, and that was before his marriage. Lourline was now almost a year old and Hope seemed proud of his beautiful wife and child. He would often say that he wished his father could see little Lourline, but Charity did not ask why he never expressed any wish to take them to see his home folks. But she knew Hope loved them; her life centered in him, and she cared for nothing else.

It was May again, just two years since she stood in the vine-covered porch singing glad anthems of praise and making a picture that won for her the idol of her life. She now stood at the gate with little Lourline clasped in her arms, watching her young husband go down the narrow path. His kisses were fresh on their lips and little Lourline caught his backward glances and threw out her little hand, crying "bye-bye." Why did Charity's mind go back to that May morning long ago, and why did she unconsciously look toward the cloud of mist that still hovered over the mountain peaks?

Oh! Charity Parton? Charity Parton! you may

well gaze on the cloud of mist with awe, for ere another day dawns upon you a cloud darker than you have ever known, will, indeed, fall across your threshold and shut out your happy young life.

“Young love’s first dream,
A dream indeed unreal, shadowy, brief,
Is done and ended.”

CHAPTER II.

“A most portentous trial awaits thee now.”

When Charity could no longer see her husband she retraced her steps, and, placing little Lourline in her chair, set about her duties.

Hope Carlton went down the mountain side whistling a merry tune, thinking of all men, he certainly was the happiest. Little did he dream of the cloud that was gathering, nor how soon it would overcast his life-sky. All day his heart seemed thrilled with happiness that was the outgrowth of perfect contentment. But just before the arrival of the evening train he was startled out of his peaceful self-composure. A telegram was handed him, and with great surprise he read:

“Coming to see you on the 7:30 train.
MOTHER.”

If a thunderbolt had burst from a cloudless sky upon him he could not have been more astonished. His mother was coming and all would be known now. What could he do? Nothing seemed clear to him but to brave it out like an honorable man. He had just time to thrust the despatch into his pocket, for already the train had whistled, and on he hurried to the depot to meet his mother.

Mrs. Carlton seemed greatly rejoiced to meet her son, and complimented him on his good looks and healthful, robust appearance. He conducted her to the hotel, which was soon reached, and left her in the parlor. While they were making ready her room, he went to see after her baggage. No sooner had Hope's footsteps died away than one of the lady boarders entered. "You are Mr. Hope Carlton's mother?" she began.

"I have that honor," replied Mrs. Carlton.

The lady boarder being very fond of gossip, especially enjoyed being the bearer of startling news, and plunged at once into an animated conversation.

"Your first visit to Plantville, is it not?" she asked Mrs. Carlton.

"My very first, and quite a long trip it is, too, but I could wait no longer to see my boy; he seems so happy here I was fearful he would forget us entirely."

"I do not wonder he seems so happy here," answered the lady, and continuing, "I presume you had a great desire to see your son's wife and child? They are both very beautiful."

"My son's wife and child!" said Mrs. Carlton, rising to her feet. "My son's wife and child? My son is not married; you are mistaken, madam."

"Indeed, I am not; he has been married quite two years, and Charity Parton, the mountain girl, is his wife."

She could see what effect her words were having; could see how the proud woman paced the floor and clinched her hands in her anger, and secretly the gossiping woman was enjoying the scene she was causing, but she had politeness enough to retire when she heard Hope Carlton's footsteps.

Hope entered the room in his own happy way, with some joyous expression on his lips, but one glance at his mother told him that he had been betrayed.

She sprang toward him with all the fierceness of an enraged tigress, and seizing his arms held them in a death-like grasp, while she hissed, rather than spoke:

"Say it is false! Say that you are not married to Charity Parton, the mountain girl? Say it is false, or I will still the very life-blood in your veins!"

Hope closed his eyes to shut out that terrible vision before him. And she was his mother, his mother whom he had not seen for many long months.

"Release me," he finally said, "and I will tell you all about it."

Her arms dropped to her side and he took a step back. Looking into her angry eyes he said: "Yes, mother, it is true. I am married to the truest, purest, sweetest woman on earth, and her name was Charity Parton. She is a mountain girl and as beautiful as a dream of heaven. She is educated, and her only sin, you would call it a sin, is that she was poor. We have a lovely little girl. Now, my mother," and he knelt at her feet, "on bended knee I plead with you; will you not receive my darlings into your family? Will you not let Charity be your daughter?"

"Charity! What a name!" and she laughed in scorn. "Typical of a mountain character, I suppose. What would we do with Charity Parton in New York circles? The idea is preposterous. Arise, my son; you are mine still and all the Charity Partons on earth shall not take you from me. You shall never see this low-born woman and her child again. Do you hear me! My words are law; you shall return home with me to-

morrow. Your father shall send out another agent, and your life in Plantville shall be a thing of the past."

"Oh, mother, mother! What are you doing? What do you mean? Would you break my heart, blight my life, destroy my hopes? I must see my wife and child again. You cannot, you shall not, keep me here," and he started toward the door, but she intercepted him and locked it.

"You shall never see her again, I repeat it, I repeat it. You are mine, you are under my control, and I would leave for New York this moment if there was a train, but, unfortunately, I must wait till morning. You shall go to my room and spend the night," she said as she answered a summons at the door.

"Your room is ready," said the servant, "and I will show you to it."

Hope preceded his mother to their room, and threw himself disconsolately on the couch. He could see Charity at the door watching for him, could see the long gray shadows gathering over the mountain path, and the smoke curling from the chimney of their mountain home. He could feel little Lourline's arms about his neck and her kisses on his cheeks. Starting up wildly he cried:

"Mother for God's sake let me go to my loved ones! do not, I entreat you, if you love me as a mother ought to love her child, do not be so cruel."

But she was deaf to his pleadings, and all night he paced the floor, guarded by that irate woman he called mother.

Charity, with little Lourline in her arms, watched for his coming at their trysting place down the mountain path. She watched and waited until the last sunbeam disappeared behind the mountain peaks, listening

eagerly and starting up at every sound, hoping to be greeted by her husband. Twilight shadows gathered, the air became chill, and she shuddered at the thought of returning home without him she so loved. Even little baby Lourline seemed to feel the disappointment, and as they retraced their steps, she kept repeating "bye, bye." How dismal it seemed around the fireside without him, and what had happened, she kept wondering, to detain him. He had never stayed from them this way before. But, surely, he would come ere long. Hours dragged slowly by, her father retired, and still she kept her lonely vigil, going to the door, to the gate, and listening, oh, so eagerly, for the footsteps that never came.

A presentiment of coming sorrow seemed to gather around her heart and sadly she lay down by the side of her sleeping babe, but sleep came not to those weary eyelids. When the first gray dawn of morning began to peep through the casement, she arose almost prostrated with the nervous dread of something going to happen.

Poor Hope, weary and heart-sick, just as daylight began to break over the town, threw himself on the bed that had been untouched all night and dropped into a deep sleep.

Mrs. Carlton, assuring herself that he was not likely to awaken very soon, stole silently out of the room, locked the door, and gave orders that her son was to be left undisturbed. She procured a carriage and driver and drove rapidly toward the mountain cabin.

Charity, still watching for her husband, heard the approaching wheels, and saw a carriage stop at the gate and an elegantly dressed lady alight. "Who could it

be? Did she bring news of Hope?" were her thoughts. Her father had gone out on the farm to attend to something, and baby was asleep. The lady came toward the house, and stood in the door of the sacred, vine-clad porch.

"You are Charity Parton?" said the lady.

"Charity Carlton," answered the girl, "and oh, tell me, do you bring me news of Hope?"

The woman entered the room where lay the sleeping child so beautiful in its innocence. For a moment a wave of tenderness seemed to sweep her heart-strings, and she gazed on the exquisite beauty of the mother and child, and the sanctuary seemed too holy to be desecrated. But the old, bitter hatred of poverty came back, jealousy that another should hold her son's heart, jealous of the wee darling, perhaps then guarded by angels. Hatred shone in her eyes as she said:

"No, not Charity Carlton, if you please; Charity Parton, now and forever. I give you back your name, and do not dare to ever call yourself Charity Carlton again. Yes, I have news of Hope Carlton; he is sleeping as sweetly at the hotel in Plantville as if he had never seen or heard of the low-born mountain girl who has ensnared him into her harem."

Charity's breath came quick and fast; all the proud blood of centuries coursed through her veins and mantled her cheeks, and in scornful tones she asked:

"Who are you, woman, that you dare address Hope Carlton's wife in such terms?"

"I am Hope Carlton's proud, unrelenting mother, and I have come to sever the bonds between you. In his weakness he yielded to your charms, but he now sees in its true light, the enormity of such a degrading alli-

ance and returns with me to New York, to forget this one error of his young life. We leave on the first train this morning and you will never look on his face again. Go back to your true name, Charity Parton, and be content with your humble sphere, and never try to soar above your station again. To think that such a low-born creature would come between me and mine, would try to blast my fondest hopes. Oh! I want to break your heart piecemeal."

"You have accomplished your purpose, madam, not piecemeal, but at one fatal stroke," said Charity, staggering back. "You are taking from me my very life, but if he loves me no more you may take him and welcome, only tell him for me that Charity Parton sets him free; he has broken her heart and she longs for nothing now but death."

"Rest assured, miss, the love you basked in so long was only felt when under your baleful influence. The spell is broken now and you have no claims on him. Remember you are Charity Parton now and forever. Ah! there is still a tie," she said sneeringly, taking a step toward the sleeping child, "and I had best take that, too. Only a tie to bind my son to this hated life, if I take that every link will be broken."

All the fierceness of Charity's nature shone out in that supreme moment. Springing toward the bed, she took the child in her arms, clasped it to her bosom, and said in tones wherein were blended, pathos, hopelessness, and scorn:

"You can take your child, madam, but you cannot take mine. Lourline is all that is left me now, and only with my life can she be taken. She is henceforth Lourline Parton. I would scorn to wear the name of a man

who would desert his wife and child, and I am sure my beautiful darling shall never wear his name." Oh! how proudly she drew herself up, and her velvety eyes, moist with unshed tears, shone like diamonds. "You have come," she continued, "like a great wave of darkness, and left me hopeless and aimless, but there is a God above who is the God, too, of Charity Parton, the poor mountain girl. I look to him; he says, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.'"

Mrs. Carlton quailed before the proud, defiant gaze of the peerless looking woman who stood before her, clasping the babe to her bosom, and she went out of the house noiselessly, got into her carriage and drove away. Hope was still sleeping when his mother returned, but she aroused him to eat breakfast, and make ready for their journey. He got up in a dazed sort of way, and, leaving his breakfast untouched, only did what she told him and nothing more. He made no remonstrance at anything she suggested, and said no more of his wife and child.

Soon the train was due and mother and son were on board, speeding on toward their destination. Only once did Hope seem to manifest any interest in anything, and that was when Plantville was disappearing from view. He looked toward the mountain where nestled the lowly cabin home of Charity Parton; tears rolled down his cheeks and he bowed his head on the back of the seat while convulsive sobs broke his frame.

His mother sat by his side unmoved, and bearing on her countenance only a cold, merciless expression. She thought his grief was only that of a child, poignant, indeed, at present, but that change of scene and the association with his former friends would soon cause him

to forget those he was leaving. Yes, she even believed that in a short time he would see how utterly out of unison with their surroundings such a marriage was and that he would blush at the remembrance of his youthful indiscretion.

After the departure of Mrs. Carlton, Charity stood watching the receding carriage, and, as of yore, she turned her gaze toward the cloud of mist that now seemed to be hovering in sorrow over the mountains. Was it enveloping her brief young life? Was this death, this darkness gathering around her, and this cold hand clutching at her heartstrings? She laid little Lourline on the bed and turned around, but nothing greeted her but darkness. Night had settled over the May morning, and she sank to the floor in a dead faint.

“Her love had perished, like the sound that dies
And leaves no echo, like the eastern day
That has no twilight; like the lonely flower,
Hung forth to wither on the wind, that wastes
Even its perfume.”

CHAPTER III.

“Sunrise will come next!
The shadow of the night is passed away!
Here begins your true career.
Look up to it! All now is possible—
The glory and the grandeur of each dream,
And every prophecy shall be fulfilled.”

The fire had burned low on the hearth; baby Lourline had played herself to sleep, and the vine-clad porch now lay in shadows, but still Charity remained in that deathlike swoon. Her father, coming in a little later found her in this unconscious state, and greatly alarmed, began bathing her face and doing all in his power to re-

store her. He was soon rewarded by seeing her eyes slowly unfold and hearing her whisper:

“Hope —is gone—gone forever.”

Her father gathered her in his arms, and seating himself, she wept out her sorrow on his faithful breast. When she grew stronger she told him all. All his latent energies seemed aroused.

“Low-born, indeed!” he said. “Never mind, my daughter,” and he lovingly stroked her hair. “Be brave and strong, and we will yet make them proud of Charity Parton, the poor mountain girl. We will sell our little farm, for which, only yesterday, I had an offer of three times its cost. This will enable me to set up in business, at least in a small way, in the city of L—, whither we will go, and there you shall have all the advantages I can give you.”

So the good father sold the little home, and the two, bidding adieu to their loved dead, found themselves, ere long, in L—. Oh! who so faithful, so true, or ready to help us bear the burdens of life as a loved parent.

Arrived in the city, Mr. Parton soon found a cousin whom he had left in Virginia. This gentleman, knowing Mr. Parton’s excellent business capacity, and needing a man, gave him the position at once. This good fortune caused Mr. Parton to change his plans, and the means he had brought with him to invest in business were, accordingly, devoted to the purchase of a neat and desirable suburban cottage.

So their new life began. Contact with the business world and association with commercial men soon brought back the vigor and sparkle of an active life to Mr. Parton; while Charity, seeing the great change wrought in her father, became cheerful and hopeful. A new world

now opened up to her; she saw society in a different way from anything she had known; the possibilities of existence spread themselves out before her, and, above all, the urgent need of being better educated thrust itself upon her.

Arrangements were made, and she prosecuted her studies with unremitting energy and unabating zeal until both in literary branches and in music she was the peer of any.

About this time there was a call through the newspapers for the Lourline heirs. Her mother's brother had died in California leaving a vast fortune, and Charity was found to be the only living heir to the large inheritance.

The little cottage was disposed of, and they moved up town into more commodious quarters. Charity was received in the first circles, and many admirers sought her hand. Charity and her father had made no effort to keep her life's history a secret, and it was generally known that she bore the name of Charity Parton with honor.

Four years had gone by, and Charity had developed into a peerless woman, commanding and graceful in appearance. Her father looked with great pride on his treasures. Little Lourline, with her clear-cut features, long, golden curls, and heavenly blue eyes, was a model for a painter.

Charity was now able to have one of her fondest wishes carried out, the removal of her mother's remains to L—, and their interment in the cemetery. A fine monument was erected to her memory, and now Charity felt that every trace that bound her to the old life at Plantville was removed.

With Hope it was different. He had no little, childish prattler to make life sweet for him, and his being torn away from those dearest to him severed his life in two. He grew into a cold, cynical man, loving no one, but rather hating himself. Back, back, his mind would wander to the mountain cabin, and again he would see Charity in all her girlish beauty coming down the mountain path to meet him; and Lourline, the tie that bound them together, oh! she swept his heart-strings as nothing had ever done—and this was only a fair-faced, sunny-haired child, yet the idol of Hope Carlton's life. He thought, as the months passed by: "She has learned to talk now. I wonder if Charity has taught her to lisp my name?" and when the years had dragged wearily on, he wondered how his little Lourline looked, and such a longing to see his wife and child took possession of him. His health had been failing ever since his return to New York, and as a restorative they had traveled all over Europe. His mother had tried to marry him to girls of wealth, but all to no purpose. The last scheme she had laid was to wed him to a young lady not only of handsome endowments, but whose many good traits of character far out-valued her dowry. To this proposition Hope, in mournful tones, said:

"Mother, Miss Bainbridge is a true-hearted woman. You broke my heart years ago, so now I have no love to give her and I am sure I would not wrong her by word or deed. I may just as well tell you, I will never love any one but Charity Parton, and our little girl is the tie drawing me back to old Kentucky."

Mrs. Carlton realized at last that her son was not to be persuaded into any matrimonial alliance, and she ceased to urge him to taking a step so much against

his better nature. She now saw in all its different phases the great mistake she had made. In order to carry out her lofty aspirations for her son, she had not only blighted his life and Charity's, but had made her own life miserable, and it was telling on her in the saddened face and silver tresses that lay on her brow. Was remorse doing its work in her heart? If not, why this change, and why did that picture of the grief-stricken woman clasping her babe to her bosom so often present itself, and why did Charity Parton's words, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," haunt her by day and by night?

Hope's health continued to grow worse, and now he was unable to leave his room. The physician said that it was some heart-sorrow, and beyond the province of medical science; restoration could only be effected by removing the cause if that were possible.

In his delirium, Hope begged for his wife and child. There came a day when the damp dew gathered on his brow, and they said he was nearing the river. Mr. Carlton, who had never been bitter toward Hope's wife, sent a telegram to Plantville for Charity to come. It was forwarded to L—, and with great sorrow Charity read:

"Hope is dying, come at once.

"H. F. CARLTON."

She turned ghastly pale and placed one hand on her heart as if to hush its wild throbbings, and with the other handed the telegram to her father.

"Will you go?" he asked.

"No, it would only make my life more desolate; he deserted me, and even in death I cannot go to him." She could not understand how false Hope's mother was, or how completely she ruled her household.

Hope was not dying as the telegram stated, although they believed him to be. His mother, thinking she would soon be left childless, sat by his bedside weeping. Oh! how the wrongs of the past loomed up before her now, and how she longed to make some reparation, but it was too late. The physician had said if this heart-sorrow were removed he could recover. Had she not caused it? and now God was wreaking vengeance on her. She had killed her son, not at one fatal stroke, as she had broken Charity Parton's heart, but by degrees. Oh! if they only would come in answer to the telegram, she prayed in her anguish. But what had become of them? Perhaps Charity was dead, too, and she was doubly a murderer. But the child. Might it not be living? She would institute a search at once. If only her son could survive till she might find them.

Hope seemed conscious of his mother's grief, and looking up sadly, he raised his hand and laid it lovingly in hers. This was the first caress he had given her since her trip to Plantville. It had seemed that love had died out of his life. Joy shone in his mother's countenance as she said:

"Tell me, my darling, what mother can do for you. Only tell me, and any wish of yours shall be granted."

"Charity," he murmured, "and Lourline."

"We have sent for them," she answered.

A smile of happiness overspread his face and he clapped his hands in excess of joy.

"If they do not come we will take you to them, God willing, my boy; and you and your darlings shall be reunited."

"Oh, mother, mother!" and he twined his arms around her neck and put his mouth up to kiss her.

From that moment he began to improve, although the disappointment was great when his wife and child came not in answer to the telegram; and day after day he would ask if they had come.

During his convalescence, Hope asked his mother, one day, to read from the Holy Scripture. He said:

"I feel so much better, I believe I shall soon be well enough to start on our journey to Plantville. God has done great things for me, and I wish to hear his Holy Word."

Mrs. Carlton got the Bible and sat down by her son's bedside. She opened the book at the nineteenth chapter of Matthew and her eyes fell on the sixth verse, and she silently read, "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." She closed the sacred volume and sat as in deep thought. Hope, observing the pallor of her countenance, said:

"Mother, you are not well. Put the Bible away and I will have you read for me sometime when you feel more like it. Your constant attention to me is wearing on you, and you need perfect rest now."

She did as her son requested, but those words, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," kept ringing in her ears. Was God speaking them to her through his sacred word? And why did the book open at that place of all others? Yes, they were for her; she felt it in every fibre of her being. Had she not broken his command, had she not dared to put asunder what God had joined together? In deep repentance she sought God's forgiveness, and he must have touched her heart with pardoning love, for of late such a sweet peace shone out in her face, and her one absorbing thought now was to devise plans for reuniting

the two she had so cruelly separated. So, as soon as Hope was able to travel, the three started for Plantville. The impatience of Mrs. Carlton and her son was very great throughout the whole journey, and they had many misgivings as to what the result would be. Would they find Charity and her child? And if they were successful in finding them, how would it all end?

At last, Plantville appeared to view, and familiar scenes so dear to Hope spread out in beauty once more before him. Great was their surprise and bitter the disappointment when they learned that Mr. Parton no longer resided there. They were informed that he had removed to the city of L— soon after his daughter was deserted by her husband. "Deserted by her husband!" And this was the light in which he was held. Hope winced at the thought. Did Charity believe this too that he had deserted her of his own free will? If so, could they effect a reconciliation? But there was little Lourline—was she not a tie to bind them together? Perhaps, as such, she would plead for him.

* * * * *

Days drifted on, and to Charity no more tidings came from Hope. Two, three, and even six months had gone by and every day Charity found herself watching and waiting and listening for news from the one to whom she had given her first, her last, her only love.

She was sitting by the open window one bright evening in June. As usual of late her thoughts were busy with the sweet long ago, when Hope filled all her life with sunshine. Was he living, or had his spirit crossed over into perfect rest.

A carriage stopped at the gate and a lady came up the broad walk. Was there nothing in the proud step

that caused her thoughts to revert to that morning when a carriage stopped at the mountain home? Ah! the cloud of mist hanging over the mountain peaks—that day of darkness all flitted before her mental vision. But there was a ring at the door-bell, and the servant ushered in a lady.

Charity arose, but she did not recognize in the sad-faced woman, the proud, cruel Mrs. Carlton of five years ago. The lady stood for a moment abashed before the magnificent woman who rose to greet her.

“Are you Mrs. Charity Carlton?” she asked tremblingly.

“I am Charity Parton,” she answered, as if proud of the very name.

“You were Charity Carlton once, Hope Carlton’s wife,” she said.

“Yes, until a woman, a Jezebel, came and robbed me of all that made life dear. No, not all, for I had little Lourline left me, and she was the only tie that bound me to life.”

“If this woman, this Jezebel, should come back and plead for her son, would you forgive her? Would you take back your husband, Lourline’s father?”

“Oh! do not ask me; I have tried to put away the old life from me, for he deserted me, deserted Charity Parton, the poor mountain girl, without even a good-bye, not even one kiss on which to feed her poor, famished heart. He sent his mother to heap curses on me. He sent her to break my heart. Oh, don’t ask me, for he deserted me, he deserted me. Branded ‘the deserted wife,’ I have had to live down the scorns and sneers of a cruel world.”

“I am Hope Carlton’s mother, I am the Jezebel who so wronged you, and on bended knee I plead with you

to take him back. I am the only one to blame. I was ambitious for my son, and the thought that he had gone against my dearest wishes and married a poor, unknown mountain girl was more than my proud spirit could brook. Like a vulture, I pounced down on him unawares. I suspected all was not right by his staying so contendedly away from us in that wild mountainous region, and my convictions were verified by a gossiping woman I met in the parlor at the hotel. She broke the news to me soon after my arrival and I resolved I would take his life's blood before he should ever see you again. He was locked in his room asleep, and I had the key when I went to see you. He had entreated me to allow him to go to his wife and child and all night he paced the floor like a madman. When I returned from my mission to the mountain cabin I found him still sleeping. He awoke soon after, but my bright, beautiful, affectionate boy was gone, and in his stead was a dazed listless creature whom I carried to New York. When he recovered from this he was never the same toward me nor to any one except his father. His one love was Charity Parton, and if she casts him off now I fear the result will be fatal."

Charity was tremulous with emotion and great tears rolled down her cheeks.

"He deserted me, and you broke my heart," she kept repeating. She stood clasping little Lourline's hand in hers, while the child looked on wondering what it all meant. But there was a footstep on the veranda, in the hall, a footstep she had listened to years ago. Hope Carlton entered; there was a glad light in his eyes—all the love of a lifetime shone there, and, opening his arms, he said in a voice tremulous with love:

"Charity, Charity, my wife, my only love, will you come?"

And, forgetting little Lourline, forgetting everything but that Hope Carlton, her husband, stood before her in the old love that she knew, she dropped the child's hand and went to her rightful place. Hope Carlton folded his brave, strong arms around her, not the boyish lover-husband now, but a man with a heart and will that all on earth could not break.

Oh, the tears, the kisses of joy! Mrs. Carlton stole out softly and went to her carriage and to her hotel; the place was too sacred for her.

The evening passed noiselessly on, twilight shadows gathered, and still the two sat by the open window with little Lourline on her father's knee.

Mr. Parton came in, and hearing voices wondered who was with Charity. She heard her father coming, and linking her arm in Hope's, she said:

"Oh, father, my husband has come; Hope has come, and he has been true to me all these years."

And Mr. Parton, throwing his arms around each, said:

"God bless you, my children."

The following morning Mr. Carlton and wife drove around to Charity's home. When Charity met Mr. Carlton, and he grasped her hand, and she looked into his eyes, so like Hope's, she felt that if Mrs. Carlton had been like her husband, she and Hope would have been spared all this sorrow.

"We have come to say good-bye," said Mrs. Carlton, "for we leave for home in an hour or two. I wanted to know that you had forgiven me," she said, through her tears, to Charity. "God has forgiven me, and if I feel

that I have the forgiveness of you and Hope, I can die in peace."

"We forgive you freely," said Charity. "It is such happiness to be re-united, and God is so good to bring my husband back to me I could bear no ill will to any one."

JOE'S SWEETHEART.

A LIFE'S HISTORY.

I

“Yes, Joseph, my boy, she went back on you square,—
Now be sober, old friend, don't get on a 'tare,'
And the story I'll tell from beginning to end,
Though a sad one as ever was told or was penned.
The girl, you remember, was fair as a dove—
But who of us forget the girl that we love?
Some men in the lonely grey ruins of their heart
Treasure an idol of which life seems a part,—
Your pardon—a tear? Ah! that whispers at last
Of a memory sacred to you and the past.
Well, the girl, though she loved you, was not treated right,
And a life full of sunshine became dark as night;
Left alone, all in widow's weeds, mournful and sad,—
But the story is premature—that is too bad!
Ah! I see in your face both sorrow and joy,
And you, doubtless, anticipate the future, my boy.
A widow, by Jove, there's a chance for you yet,
As I said, once before, Joe, we men don't forget.
Life is 'a war with the false and the true,'
We're off with the old and on with the new,
Oft leaving bright hopes to corrode and to rust,
And burying our hearts' loves low in the dust;
But they, like Nemesis, still keep on our track
And force us to turn round and give a look back
To a past that is blotted and all stained with tears—

A past that will haunt us through all coming years.
That tear,—was it not your Nemesis, friend Joe? —
A reminder that you had caused a heart woe?
You were poor, but were proud, and the old folks did wrong,
And you gave up the girl as though a mere song.
And the curtain then fell on your life's drama, boy.
She had played with your heart as a child with a toy,—
So you thought—but some women love fervent and strong,
Let me tell you they love through right and through wrong.
And so this girl loved, broken-hearted, yet true;
But she gathered the fragments, and buried them, too,
Clear out of sight when the new lover came,
The lover who'd wealth, position and fame.
So her hand was bestowed, but her heart was laid low,
And buried her hopes were, and all for you, Joe.
Now the rest is soon told, and I hasten to close
The tale of a life flecked with sunshine and woes,
And a life of mad pleasure, a life full of sin,
A life full of heartaches, then death closed all in.

* * * * *

Back again to the home that had given her birth,
With a future o'er-burdened and no room for mirth,
Our heroine went, over shadowed and sad,
And there you will find her, Joseph, my lad.
So my story is ended, but not as it should;
You a sequel could make to it, Joe, if you would.
Go home to your first love—the love of your heart—
And say she shall have in your future a part,—
A part that no woman on earth's broad domain
Has ever shared but her, or shall share again.
Ah! Joseph, your face was a panoramic scene,
With sunshine and shadow and rain in between,
But the sunset has faded, a morning all new,
Resplendent and golden, is dawning on you.
Back to the dreams that lay dead in the past,
Joseph, you'll go ere life's sun sets at last.
And bind up the bruised heart—the heart rent in twain—
Then I'll know that my story has not been in vain.

II

Well, Joseph, my boy, you're crippled I see,
And walking with crutches. Now what can it be
That has caused such a mishap you to befall?
And you are walking with crutches? Now Joe is that all?
Why turn away? Look me straight in the eye;
What else boy, has happened? Why heave such a sigh?
Has she, of all women, again played you false?
Ah! Joseph, these maids lead us men a gay waltz.
They flatter, they chatter, they woo with a smile,
With one glance of the eye full of love just the while.
Like the will-o'-the-wisp, through marsh and through glade,
We follow, still follow, through sunshine and shade,
Entangled, ensnared, in the meshes they weave,
Learning too late that fair maids can deceive.
But 'tis needless you tell—a shadow may be
Across your great heart, like a wave of the sea;
You staked your whole life for weal or for woe,
And nothing but darkness came to you, Joe.
Now, each of us trials, in this life, attend,
But such trials as yours, Joe, make of us men.
It is gold that comes from the crucible gold,
Refin'd by the test, purified for the mold.
'Tis the crucible of life in which we are tried,
What matters it, then, if vanity and pride
Are found to be dross! But we'll pass this by;
There's an after-life, Joe, you may reach if you try.
If a hand's upraised, 'tis the hand of God,
And it's he that says, 'Pass under the rod.'
And your crutches; my boy, they serve to divide
This life from the life on the other side.
But you are silent, my friend. Was my prophecy vain?
Were the old folks obstinate? Trouble again?
Now, out with it lad, keep nothing back,
And my friendship and sympathy you never shall lack;
Your face you avert, in your eyes there are tears,
Ah! Joe, you awaken my very worst fears.
I thought the ordeals that she had passed through,
Had purified, strengthened, and made her anew,

But these crutches, I fear, she now makes a cross;
If so, then, my boy, don't count her a loss;
For a woman whose soul is fashioned of God
Would stoop down and kiss where these lame feet had trod;
She would hug to her bosom these crutches of wood,
And whisper, 'It only occurred for our good,
Not us such misfortune shall ever divide,
And my rightful place is now by your side.'
For such love as this, boy, who wouldn't be lame?
And yet love that is love is love just the same.
She'll do it, she'll do it; I'll never, by Jove,
Go back on her trueness, though bitterness strove
For the mast'ry a while, as I gazed on your face,
And failed not your thoughts with my thoughts to trace,
You may trust her, old friend, and all will be right
As surely as day succeeds the dark night.
Now Joseph, good-bye. When I see you again
I believe you will be the happiest of men.
You can trust her—she's made of the right kind of stuff—
And what I have said has been quite enough
To soothe your emotions. Believe me, my friend,
Her love was yours once—'tis yours to the end.

III

Ah! Joseph, old friend, 'tis indeed a surprise,
To meet you again 'neath Kentucky's fair skies;
Two years have gone by on time's rolling tide,
And I see you have laid your crutches aside.
So seldom I meet with old friends of the past
That 'tis with great pleasure I now your hand clasp.
How fares it with you? The same as of old?
Are no silver threads hidden yet 'mong the gold?—
Nor the footprints that time has bequeathed unto you
A warning your reward will ere long be due?
As we look o'er the years gone to waste and mis-spent,
Do we sigh that so short was the period lent
To do and undo every deed that was done
Before our career had its setting of sun?
But such is existence, all death and decay,—

To-morrow we'll smile o'er the grave of to-day.
But tell me, my boy, has the world used you well?
Has your bark had smooth sailing? What! nothing to tell?
You will find me the same true friend as of yore—
And my heart to you ever a free, open door,—
A kind of receptacle for life's odds and ends,
With room for the sorrows that God on us sends.
Has your cup been filled up with joy, to the brim?
And do you forget to give praises to him
Who watches o'er all, both great and both small,
And forgets not to mark e'en the sparrows fall?
Not married? And why not wedded to-day?
Has the tempter again come, and led you astray?
You are silent, old friend, is there naught to explain?
And after all, Joe, was my prophecy vain?
Stood she not by you when troublous times came?
Loving with love that was love just the same?
Alas! there was trouble; I see in your face,
A heart-sorrow time alone can efface.
You gave back the vows so sacredly made,
And I fear you've full heavy a penalty paid.
Low in spirits and purse you gave the girl up
And for surcease of sorrow went back to the cup.
Oh, heavens! that such should now be your fate;
But it's gone with the past and forever too late
For amends, save through anguish and heart-rending tears.
But we'll hope that ere long, in the fast coming years,
Sweet trust in the Master will bring peace to your soul
That is worth more to you than fine silver and gold.
But you are no exception, we men are all weak,
We yield to temptation, our ruin to seek,
Our manhood refuses to assert its full sway,
And the good that is in us seems all gone for aye.
But God is above us, he does not forget,
And a spark of the old life is left in us yet.
With talents all dormant, and going to rust,
Oh! Joseph, you'll be what God wills you must,
A man of his image, and formed by his hand,
Exerting good influence all over the land
With a little hand beck'ning you upward and on,

Dear Joseph, there's much by you yet to be won.
And all the good deeds and the great man you make,
You will feel was accomplished just for her sake.
And what is the news,—what news; did you say?
Ah! more'n you can bear this bright month of May.
The home folks are well, and are all just the same,
And seem happy even to mention your name.
The young folks are quiet—a little subdued—
And few are the maidens now being wooed,
But the fairest is won—her lover was Death;
Kissed down are her eyelids, and stilled is her breath,
And, folded, her little hands lie on her breast,
For your sweetheart, Joseph, has gone to her rest.
A new grave in the cemetery's wreathed with damp flowers,
Wet with tear-drops of loving heart-showers.
By the side of the husband the young wife was laid,
And in your heart, Joseph, a grave, too, was made.
What! heart-breaking sobs from a man once so strong!
Oh, Joseph, my boy, I know you did wrong,—
But your old friend is by you with eyes full of tears,
And knows that she loved you through all these long years.
She sent you good-bye, said: 'Meet her up there,
Where the heart's free from sorrow and knows not a care.'
She said that she loved you, was true to life's end;
What more could you wish from a dying friend?
I know that you loved her, and she you will miss,
But, Joseph, I dreamed not of such love as this.
Yet in all of life's sorrows there is nothing like death,
It takes from us loved ones and hushes their breath;
Their chair is all vacant, home broken and lone,
And all that is left us is our past to bemoan.
But bear your loss bravely and do not give down,
For 'the greater the cross is, the brighter the crown.'
She's led the way upward for you and for me,
And in heaven, my boy, your idol you'll see."

HOW MRS. GRAFTON BUILT UP THE PLAINVILLE CHURCH.

Mrs. Grafton was a prominent member of the Plainville church, and a very enthusiastic worker in the Baptist cause. She would allow no opportunity to pass wherein a word could be said or a deed done that she hoped might bear rich fruits. If she heard that a Baptist family had moved into the neighborhood she thought nothing of driving several miles to call on them, inform them of her excellent pastor, the dates of different church services, etc., always ending with a cordial invitation for the new-comers to cast their lot with the Baptists of Plainville. It was during a call of this kind that she was afraid she was a better Baptist than she was a Christian, by which she meant, no doubt, that in her zeal for the church, looking after the old members and keeping them revived, bringing in new ones, etc., she was likely to neglect her own spiritual growth.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Grafton expressed herself in this way, everybody believed her to be a true, conscientious Christian, and had great confidence in her religion; for they knew that her zeal was equaled by her liberality, and that with her to say and to do went hand-in-hand. True, she made no effort at display in these matters, but such gifts as hers could not easily be kept hidden. Had she not only recently given five hundred

dollars to the Sharon College library? And a Christmas gift of twenty-five dollars to her pastor was only an ordinary occurrence, while of her private charities full many a widow and orphan of Plainville could testify in words of warmest gratitude.

But, despite the best efforts of Mrs. Grafton, the Plainville church did not prosper as she had longed to see it, and sometimes she almost despaired of ever seeing that Pentecostal outpouring for which she had so earnestly prayed.

To-day she felt sorely grieved, and, being alone, this apathetic condition of the church was ever before her. Brother Harrington, their beloved pastor, had just closed a series of meetings at Plainville, but alas! with the same sad results as he had year after year—no conversions, no additions to the church. “He had preached the Gospel good and true,” and did it strike home to no hearts? Was Plainville exempt from sin? Ah! no indeed. If ever a town needed a shaking up of the dry bones in Israel it was this, and yet, in deep sorrow over his ill success each year the pastor would resign, saying there were others who could do more good here than he, but the members still clung to him and would not accept his resignation.

Now, Brother Harrington had no warmer friend in his church than Mrs. Grafton, yet she knew that some obstacle lay in the way of the pastor's success at this place. There was trouble somewhere, and what was it? she asked herself over and over. Did it find a lodging place among the members, or was it with the pastor, or both? No, it could not be with the pastor, for he had done his duty if ever a pastor did, and how could he cause the cold indifference of the members and the

people? "I would give all I possess," thought she, "to know the real cause of the stagnant state of our church, and to be the instrument in removing the cause." She was startled from her reverie by the ringing of the doorbell and the servant's ushering in Miss Carrie Hamilton, a young lady with whom Mrs. Grafton had recently formed quite a friendship, being the daughter of an old time friend; but little did she think that through her she would find the solution to this perplexing problem.

"I am glad to see you this morning, Carrie," said Mrs. Grafton. "Pray be seated and administer your soothing powers to my drooping spirits. I have been lost in thought for the last hour, and your ringing at the doorbell aroused me like one from a dream. I have been puzzling my brain over church matters and wishing I could do some good in the world. I am sure I have the will if I could only find the way."

"I do not trouble myself much about church matters," answered Miss Hamilton, "there are other things of greater weight with me. I just accept the inevitable in regard to church affairs and go ahead. And, as to doing some good in the world, I leave that to those better suited to the purpose. I know I like to make hearts happy, and I never wish to bring sorrow to any one, but I fear the art of doing good is lost with me, or when the day of reckoning comes my mite will be very small. I do not feel that I especially belong anywhere, and, of course, haven't much interest in church matters."

"I thought you were a member of the C.P. church," said Mrs. Grafton, "and am very much surprised to hear you speak so lightly of such things."

"I have never united with any church," she replied.

“What Sunday-school do you attend?”

“I go to the C. P.,” answered Miss Hamilton.

“Is not your mother a member of the Baptist church? And are you not a Baptist in principle?” questioned Mrs. Grafton.

“Yes, my mother is a member of the Baptist church, but my brother and sisters all joined the C. P. church, and I—well you see I felt sorry for them at the C. P. church; they had no organist and so few members.”

“Yes, but if you are a Baptist in belief,” replied Mrs. Grafton, “you are using your influence against your principles. Be it ever so little, each one exerts some influence, and you are giving yours to a church you do not believe in. Now, why is it you do not unite with the Baptist church and attend our Sunday-school? My husband is the superintendent, and, I am sure, would give you a hearty welcome. Will you not make up your mind to do what you know is right,” she continued, “and come to us? You have been happily converted, you know and believe that baptism by immersion is the true mode. To remain in the world after your sins have been forgiven, after you have been washed whiter than snow, have been purified by the cleansing blood of the crucified Saviour, is to slight his greatest blessings, is to go further and further away from him until the still small voice that once brought sweetest music to your ears is unheeded. No restraining influences are thrown around you, temptations come and alluring voices are heard until you yield, and then you are found in the ball-room and at the card-table. You console your conscience, that is far from being at ease, perhaps, by saying that you are not a member of the church and you are breaking no rules; and yet God’s precious hand

has touched your heart, you have been thrilled with his divine love, and do you think he looks with pleasure to find one of his children in these halls of sin? The church serves as a safe-guard. It shows which side you are on, whose cause you have espoused. The Saviour says, 'If you love me keep my commandments,' and if you have joined the church you have obeyed and are endeavoring to obey him in this respect. You are leading toward the right instead of in the opposite direction; your influence is for good, and you can but be conscious of the approving smiles of the loving Father. Then the good that we do in His service will not go for naught, but we will live in hearts even after we have crossed over the silent border, while the recording angel will not forget to put to our account all our good works for the Master. Now will you not unite with our church?" persisted Mrs. Grafton.

"If—" and Carrie Hamilton hesitated, "if you had a different pastor I might join the church," she murmured.

"What! Surely you do not object to our dear Brother Harrington, who has served so long and so well?" asked Mrs. Grafton.

"Oh! he seems so cold, so distant," Carrie responded.

"If you knew him aright you would not speak so disparagingly of him. I think a great deal of him; he was so kind to visit me during my recent illness; and it was at a meeting conducted by him that I received the glorious blessing. I shall never forget his words to me showing his perfect faith and the great comfort they brought to my broken heart. He came to me at the altar when all seemed hidden in darkness and said: 'My

friend, I believe God will bless you; yes, I know he will bless you.' To me they were the sweetest words I had ever heard, and when the blessing did come it was to Brother Harrington I wanted to tell of my new-found happiness. Perhaps you are prejudiced against him, Carrie," said Mrs. Grafton.

"I don't know," she answered wearily, "and still I know he has done good and must be good, or he would not have remained here as long as he has."

"Why is it that you do not know him better? Does he never visit your house?" Mrs. Grafton asked.

"Visit our house?" and Carrie Hamilton looked up in great surprise. "Why I never remember seeing him at our house in all my life."

"Do you ever invite him?" Mrs. Grafton asked.

"I would as soon think of inviting an iceberg," was the answer.

"Well, how is he to know that he would receive a hearty welcome?" persisted Mrs. Grafton, "or any welcome at all?"

"My mother is a member of his church, and it is his duty to watch after and visit his members, and if it is an invitation he is waiting for, he will never get it from me. I think the fact that my mother is a Baptist is a sufficient guaranty for his visits, if only once a year. But he belongs to the wealthy," she said scornfully, "he never forgets to visit them."

"And they invite him," said Mrs. Grafton. "Some natures differ widely from others. Brother Harrington is very modest, very retiring in his nature. He is so fearful of intruding or of happening in at an opportune moment. While, on the other hand, Brother Camden would never suppose that one of his pastoral visits had stopped

the busy housewife at her washing tub and thrown her an hour late with her work, or that he had stayed until it was past time to put on the boiled dinner that she had anticipated, or while she was being strengthened and uplifted by his comforting words the bread was souring and spoiling from too much rising, or perhaps burning on the stove. He would go, in his own cheery way, perfectly unconscious that he had in any way caused any inconvenience. And the sister who had caught the cheerfulness and divine influence of her pastor would go singing to her duties, not seeming to care if she had been put back with her work. And she would wonder why Brother Camden's visits always seemed to fill the house with sunshine, and even her husband said his work seemed lighter. 'It is so pleasant,' they would say, 'to have him call in this way and make himself one of us, and it will be so long before he comes again—a whole month.' But we are not responsible for what is bred in us and becomes the growth of years. To some extent we can correct the jagged edges that come unpleasantly in contact with the world, but we do not always know what the masses like and dislike in us. Brother Harrington cannot help that; his nature, his disposition, is unlike to Brother Camden's. Now, for instance, if Brother Camden had a sister in his church who did not hear well, and he had made a good point in his sermon that he would like for her to hear, he would think nothing of addressing her in the midst of his discourse and say, "Sister Porter, did you hear that?" While it might be embarrassing to the sister, Brother Camden would think we should not be ashamed or sensitive about any affliction God sends on us, and he really wanted the sister to hear what he had to say. Brother Harrington would put his head

in the fire, so to speak, before he would address any one in this manner. So you see there must be a happy medium in everything, and while we may admire Brother Camden most for some things, there are other qualities we like best in Brother Harrington. As to his visits, he perhaps thinks if his members do not go to hear him preach they would not care for his visits."

"But how are we to know him only as a cold, indifferent, distant man if he never comes about us? How can we be otherwise than prejudiced? I think of preachers as of teachers—it is their duty to visit their members, their patrons, cultivate the friendship of the younger members of the family and teach them to look upon him as their leader, their shepherd."

"Still ministers, like teachers, want to know that they are appreciated. We are all human enough for that," said Mrs. Grafton.

"That is very true," said Carrie, "but if I were a minister I would try to look to God all the time. I would put the world away from me and forget self, knowing it was the Master's cause in which I was engaged. The Bible says, 'Pure and undefiled religion is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' Now Brother Harrington preaches this, but he does not practice it."

"I am very sorry, Carrie, that you are so prejudiced against Brother Harrington, but I hope I may yet bring things around all right, and you will come back to us."

"Really," said Carrie, "I had no idea I was making such a long call, and instead of soothing your drooping spirits, my dear Mrs. Grafton, I fear I have ruffled your feelings."

"Oh! no, not at all!" replied Mrs. Grafton, "but I was just thinking that I have a book I would like to have you read. It is a new copy of a very old book, the title is 'Grace Truman;' if you will read that," she said, as Miss Hamilton rose to go, "and do not come out a Baptist, ready and willing to unite with the church, I shall be sadly disappointed."

"I will read it with pleasure," she answered, "but will not promise, under existing circumstances, to unite with the church."

After Miss Hamilton was gone Mrs. Grafton fell to thinking. How strange that the problem which had perplexed her so sorely had so easy a solution, since she now saw it in the light presented by Carrie Hamilton. She knew the history of Mrs. Hamilton's life, how she had drunk the bitter dregs of sorrow, brought on through no fault of hers; and Brother Harrington, who knew it all, had never gone to her house to strengthen her with words of consolation and Christian sympathy. How forcibly the thought of it brought to mind Mrs. Grafton's own experience; how in the long ago she, too, had had the same bitter feelings against Brother Harrington and the Plainville church, that Carrie Hamilton was now nourishing. Had not a dark cloud of anguish lain on her threshold at one time, and who of the members of the Plainville church came to give her a word of sympathy? None; not even Brother Harrington. But that had been years ago, and she had buried all those bitter feelings with the dead past, and had taken up life anew; and if any one ever knew of the struggle that had been in her heart ere right triumphed, they did not learn it from Mrs. Grafton, for no one was now more in fellowship with the church, or had the interest of the church more at

heart than she. So she resolved when Brother Harrington's regular appointment came around, to give him an insight into the state of affairs. Mrs. Grafton was also a strong supporter of Brother Harrington, and their house was ever their pastor's home. At last the long looked-for day arrived and Brother Harrington went home with Mrs. Grafton to dinner. After the meal was served they all repaired to the cozy sitting-room for a social afternoon, Mrs. Grafton ere long introducing the subject uppermost in her mind.

"Well, Brother Harrington," she said, "the old year is drawing to a close, and I always look with sadness on his dying out, for fear with his going you, too, will leave us for newer fields. After the unsuccessful result of our meetings I know you are more discouraged than ever, and perhaps, have your mind fully made up to send in your resignation, but this I hope you will not do. You have so endeared yourself to us all during your long pastorate that I do not believe the church would consent to give you up."

"Yes, Sister Grafton," he replied, "that is my intention. I do not feel that I am doing any good here, and I must try a new field of labor. The church seems to grow colder each year, and where the trouble lies I have not the remotest idea. I am almost in despair as to what course to pursue. No one could have the interest of the church more at heart than I; no one has prayed more earnestly for the removal of the obstacle in the way of its success than I, its pastor. But it seems that all my efforts have proved fruitless, and I feel that if I am causing this coldness, this indifference on the part of the members, it is best that I should go and leave the field clear for another. So far as their affection for me is

concerned, it is true that among those with whom I have been associated it has been such that I fear that it is this that has influenced me to retain this charge year after year against my better judgment."

"And yet, Brother Harrington," replied the good sister, "if you did not know of this affection on the part of the members to whom you refer, I cannot agree with you that there was ever a time when you ought to have severed your pastoral relations with us. We have needed the sound doctrine you have preached us, the strong, practical and uplifting sermons you have delivered, and your encouraging and soul-cheering presence around our firesides. And though the ingatherings have not been so great as we had hoped for, and a large part of our membership do seem indifferent about their attendance at church, I believe the time is not far distant when all obstacles will be removed and you will feel that your work has not been in vain. There are many things that I have troubled over; much I wish to discuss with you, and many questions I wish to ask, for this has lain near my heart a long while, and I believe that a careful investigation will reveal the difficulty which, though to you may seem insurmountable, will readily yield to the proper treatment. You know the Bible says the Good Shepherd knows His sheep and they know His voice--and pardon me, Brother Harrington, but I have wondered if you know each one of your fold?"

"Well, Sister Grafton, you know the membership is right large, and they are scattered around a good deal, so I do not suppose I know them all; I know all the most prominent ones, I presume."

"Don't you think it would be a good plan to give a call to each one of them as often as possible to see how

they are getting along, to encourage them, to strengthen and comfort them?"

"You see, Sister Grafton, I never stay long enough for that when I come to fill my appointments; and if my members stay away from church time after time I conclude that they do not care for me nor wish to hear me preach, and so I do not trouble myself about them."

"But do you never hunt up such members, find out the true cause of their absence from church, whether it is sickness or discouragements, or simply carelessness, and try to remedy the fault and get them back?"

"Really, Sister Grafton, you ought to have been a preacher, you would have made things lively. I used to hunt up my missing members, but now I haven't the time; besides, if they have made up their minds not to come back to church all the visits I could make would not bring them back."

Mrs. Grafton felt aggrieved to hear Brother Harrington speak so indifferently of what lay so near her heart, and she determined to still push forward matters until he saw things just as they were.

"Did you ever visit Mrs. Hamilton?" she asked. "You know she is a widow and has had her share of sorrow."

"I do not think I was ever in her house. You know when the C. P. church sprang up here her children followed the drift and joined that church, and with her approval too, I suppose, for I heard that she said she had rather they would join a live C. P. church than a dead Baptist church; and since that time I have lost sight of her."

"Brother Harrington," said Mrs. Grafton, slightly warming up, "you are our pastor and have been for

years, and we love you as we could never love another. You are much older than I am, and I know I am not competent to advise you, but will you believe me to be your friend and not become offended at anything I may advise or suggest?"

"Of course I will not become offended at you, Sister Grafton; always feel at liberty to say what you please to me."

"Would you believe that your coldness, your indifference, as they term it, is driving members to another church?"

"Surely you do not mean it?" and Brother Harrington looked aghast.

"I certainly mean every word of it," said Mrs. Grafton, "and knowing you as I do, I am determined they shall see you in your true light. But believe me, Brother Harrington, if you do seem cold and indifferent to members of our church, I do not think the blame of this should rest wholly with you, for I can clearly see how that through our great love for you certain of us have monopolized your society to such an extent that you may unwittingly have neglected your social obligations to others equally as much entitled to your genial presence as we, and I, for one, am willing to take my share of the blame and to set about to remedy the matter." Then she told him of her conversation with Carrie Hamilton.

"Now don't you see, Sister Grafton, that it is best that I go away and leave the field to another?" and Brother Harrington sighed heavily.

"No, indeed," answered Mrs. Grafton. "Have you forgotten those beautiful lines by Miss Ellen L. Sale, published in the *Western Recorder*, and which we so much admired? Let me repeat them for you. I will begin with the third stanza:

"Then let us not blanch from the field, my friend;
Tho' 'tis hard, let us rally to duty;
Tho' we never may gather the fruitage here,
Tho' never a sign nor a word of cheer
May greet our eyes or fall on the ear,
Yet surely a picture of beauty,

"Is sometimes enwrought by the soul, my friend,
Stamped on the reverse of life's pages—
That will goldenly glow in eternity's sun
When the hands are folded, when the race is run,
And we hear the sentence on work well done
That shall echo down endless ages.

"So take up your life work once more, my friend,
And sow precious seeds, even weeping;
The Lord of the harvest, who sendeth the rain
And sunshine and dew to quicken the grain,
Has promised 'in joy you shall come again,'
Bringing rich sheaves from the reaping."

"Indeed, Sister Grafton, those words are beautiful, the sentiments are true and very strengthening, and ought to nerve a fainter heart than mine for the battle of life," said Brother Harrington.

"Just so," said the sister; "now who has sown the good seeds here? and who should reap the harvest? I propose that you stay and reap what you have sown. Also turn over a new leaf and see if it does not work like a charm."

"What do you propose to put on that new leaf?" he asked.

"First, I propose that you make your home here. What church have you that has employed you so long as this? We need you here; here lies your work. Come here and have your round of calls, make your members know you and love you and look forward to your calls as oases in the great desert of life."

"I had not thought of moving here, Sister Grafton, but I believe, after all, this might be the place for me.

I begin to realize more fully that in order to reach the hearts of the people you must know them around their own firesides."

"That is just it, Brother Harrington, and I am a firm believer in the maxim, that a house-going pastor makes a church-going people, and to begin with, we will call at Mrs. Hamilton's this evening. Without your permission I have already sent word we were coming, and I want you to cultivate the acquaintance of the young people; they have great influence."

"I am in your hands to do with as you like," and turning to Mr. Grafton, he said, "does she talk you into things this way, Brother Grafton?"

"She has a will of her own," laughingly replied the husband, who had been an interested listener.

So they went to Mrs. Hamilton's, and the evening was spent so pleasantly that when they arose to go tea was announced, and Mrs. Hamilton and Carrie wouldn't take a denial. After tea they had music, different subjects were discussed, and when time for saying good-bye came, Brother Harrington declared that he didn't know when he had spent so pleasant an evening, to which Carrie and her mother replied that they, too, had enjoyed it very much. On the way home Brother Harrington spoke in very complimentary terms of the mother and daughter.

This was only the beginning. Mrs. Grafton went with Brother Harrington to see the various members who had been neglected in his pastoral visits; the ice was broken, and the next month the minister went alone, and so continued until each member had been visited. Ere long they began to look forward to his calls and wonder when he would come again. Great was the in-

terest when it was rumored that Brother Harrington had decided to move to Plainville, and when he came each one vied with his neighbor in trying to do their pastor a service. One must haul his coal for him, another must have the house in readiness, another did not forget the larder, and still another remembered that Brother Harrington's horse and cow must needs be fed. Brother Harrington never before had such a happy home-coming, and in Plainville, too. A few months after Carrie Hamilton told Mrs. Grafton that she was perfectly delighted with Brother Harrington, and never grew tired of his preaching.

A great revolution took place, not only in the church, but in the town of Plainville. Brother Harrington's iciness had melted in the genial glow of friendship and love. The church took on a new life, old members came back, and Mrs. Grafton said it seemed like a new world.

When again Brother Harrington held a series of meetings there was a rich gathering in of harvest, and when Carrie Hamilton went up to unite with the church Mrs. Grafton felt that her cup of happiness was filled to overflowing.

"I owe it all to you," said Brother Harrington, grasping Mrs. Grafton's hand in excess of joy when the meetings closed, "to you for showing me the way."

"Not to me," she answered, "but to God, for making me the humble instrument in his hands."

OLD MEMORIES.

Awakened by the Dedication of the New Baptist Church at Providence, Ky.,
June 14, 1891.

'Tis dedication day, my friend,
And folks are flocking, one and all,
To fill the church so large and grand,
In answer to the new bell's call.
And now they've left the dear old church,
To it they've said their last good-bye,
And there it stands so lone and sad,
Its spire still pointing to the sky.
They've built a spacious, new brick church,
With cushioned pews, and carpets fine,
With stained-glass windows, costly, too,
Thro' which the glorious light may shine.
The organ is the grandest one
In all the blessed country round,
And voices in the chanting choir
Will make the vaulted walls resound.
They're going to give the church to God;
They're decked out all so bright and gay;
But as for me, my tears will come—
Old memories round my heart will play.
I look back to the past, my friend;
Our pastor then was young and strong;
No silver threads were o'er his brow
When first he came our flock among.

He's served us more than twenty years,
 He's preached the gospel, good and true,
 But now he's left the dear old church
 To lead his flock into the new.

Ah! dear old church, how many scenes
 Of unmixed joy we've witnessed here!
 And sad ones, too; we've sometimes wept
 O'er faces cold and forms so dear.
 How many shouts of new-born souls
 Ascended hence to God's high throne!
 How many here have plighted troth—
 How oft two hearts been here made one!
 'Twas in this house, this very house,
 The heavenly blessing came to me;
 And how these walls did glow with light
 That only a new-born soul can see!
 And how the preacher's face did shine,
 And all that happy, happy throng!
 I tell you 'twas a glorious time
 Of shouting, praise, and sacred song!
 The Methodists joined in with us,
 And staid Episcopalians, too;
 The Campbellites came to our aid,
 The hosts of Evil to subdue.
 Oh, how I love to think of it.
 That joyful, happy, blissful night!
 It makes my soul leap up to God
 And feel like taking wings of flight.
 And don't you think I love this church—
 The old one—not the fine and new?
 But I guess the Lord will know me there,
 And love me in the cushioned pew.

HOW THEY FOOLED THE OLD FOLKS.

“Thar’s that gate agin, an’ it’s nothin’ but bang! bang! rap! rap! from morning till night. Well, I’ll sw’ar if it haint that Byrd Carter comin’ up the walk and er struttin’ wid his high-top, slick bee gum sot onter de back ob his head and er flourishin’ of his cane, fur all the world like he’d jes’ stepped outen er ban’ box. The foppish ape! I don’t see what any gal could promise herself to marry him for. Thar goes the door now, rap! rap! I sw’ar I wish ‘outen’ as the city folks call it, would never come round. Here that Byrd Carter mus’ bring hisself ever’ summer er pretendin’ to be er visitin’ of his cousin, Dick Carson, and the whole of Beechwood naborhood must be run crazy on his account. Thar mus’ be picnics, no end to ’em, croquet parties and more fol-de-rol foolishness than was ever hearn of—ever’ nonsense to be foolin’ away time. Berrylline’ll never be no ’count, and never have the sense she was bornd with. It’s rap! rap! at the door, run in and out after Berrylline tell I’m jest erbout worn threadbar’. I’ll sw’ar, that door haint had er moment’s peace this evenin’, ever’ time I git inter a doze here comes some of the youngsters er friskin’ and er prancin’ er round like so many young colts. I wonder that Berrylline don’t git tired o’ so much prancin’ er round,” said the old man, half hid among the pillows on a lounge by the open

window, as he gave his bandana a vigorous twirl across his face to scare off the flies that seemed to have a fancy for tickling his nose, and turned over to go back to his dozing.

"Don't be so hard on Berrylline, Zachariah, you furgit you was once young, and thar was no young man of my knowin' that pranced, as you call it, more'n you did," said an old lady from her patching by the window in the corner. "And you don't know but what I got mighty tired of you in those days either."

"Well, if you did," the old man drawled out half asleep, "you've been er monstrous long time er tellin' me of it."

Just then the door burst open and a merry voice said:

"Mother, Mr. Carter wants me to go driving with him. May I go? The evening is delightful for driving; besides he has a splendid span of horses and we can go to see cousin Annie in a flash."

"Yes, yes," said the old man mockingly. "A flash! Indeed Byrd Carter is such a wonderful fellow he'll be er takin' yer to der moon in er flash, der nex' thing. It's er great pity while he's er flashin' he—he don't flash a little more money inter his pocket."

"Mother, may I go?" asked Beryl again, seeming not to hear her father's remarks.

"No; you can't," stormed out the father, "and I tell you Berrylline—and I mean it, too—I don't want any Byrd Carters in mine. The truth of the business is, I haint got no sort of use fur city chaps, nohow, and specially them that tries to put on so many airs."

"Oh, mother! Do tell father to hush. Mr. Carter will surely hear him," whispered Beryl.

"I don't keer if he does," came back in louder

tones. "You are determined to go agin my will, and you'll see how you'll turn out—you'll see! Now if it was Dick Carson I wouldn't say nary word. But no; you'd be er pleasin' your old daddy too well. You mus' always be on the rule of contrariness. You've got your head sot on marryin' this city chap wid nothin' but the clothes on his back, and nothin' else'll do you but to marry him; but I'll not give you a red cent, and you'll see whar you'll land. Go on, go on; don't be er standin' thar like you're fit to cry, the time'll come soon enough to cry when you see whar you'll land."

"Mother," said Beryl, "what shall I do! Must I go?"

"Why yes, of course. I can't see how you are to get out of it. You don't want to insult Mr. Carter."

"I 'spose my word haint nothing," growled the old man. "I can't even be master in my own house. Well, we'll see whar she'll land."

With a merry twinkle in her eyes Beryl donned her hat and was soon riding gayly by Byrd Carter's side, but the old man kept muttering:

"Yes, yes, we'll all see whar she'll land."

"Land Pap? Whose agoin' to land? Is thar a boat comin' down the river this evenin'? Is it a big boat? What is its name? Oh! I'm going to see it. You said I might go to see the very next one that come. Now, Pap, you musn't go back on me," and Pat Lyman, a boy of eight with an oyster can of bait in one hand and his fishing pole in the other, strode into the room.

"Who said anything 'bout er boat, you little rascal?" answered the father. "I see you've made your 'rangements to go somewhar, boat or no boat. How did you know I'd let you go, you scamp? Haint you got your bait, as if you was goin' anyhow?"

"I wasn't goin' to the river though; me and Jim Perkins was goin' to the creek, but you said a boat was going to land and I was bound to see it and I changed my notion 'bout goin' to the creek quickr'n you could say 'Jack Roberson.' "

"Git out! Git out! you imperdent pup. If you say boat or land to me ergin I'll wallup you in an inch of your life," roared the old man.

The youngster departed for the creek and his companion, fully convinced that he had approached the old gentleman at a very inopportune moment.

"It is very strange, Beryl, that your father dislikes me so much," said Byrd Carter, as they drove leisurely along.

"Did you hear what he said this evening?" blushing asked Beryl.

"Why, certainly I did, but it amused me to see the position he takes. If I were some hideous monster he could not make a greater fuss about my visits."

"You must not mind my father," said Beryl. "He is a little peculiar at times, but for all that, he has a kind heart."

"I do not doubt that, but it is not always pleasant to hear one's own self spoken of so disparagingly."

"I know that it is anything but pleasant, and I regret that father allows prejudice to influence him to such an extent. But it is amusing to observe how partial he is to your cousin, Mr. Carson."

"And so bitter toward me," replied Carter.

"Yes," answered Beryl. "But father is old foggyish, and he imagines you are dudish, citified, etc. Reared in the rural districts, as he has been, he could hardly be convinced that a true man could be brought

up in a city; and he thinks I am going against his will just to be obstinate, as if we could control our hearts, if we were really in love with each other. He does not dream that you are cousin Annie's lover, and only my friend and confidant."

"Heigh, ho! And that is the truth of it, is it? We might have a little fun out of him if it wouldn't be too cruel."

"Yes, I have thought of that; if only to tease him a little while. He does not suspect for one moment that Dick Carson and I are engaged, but thinks it is you I love."

"How could he have made such a mistake? and does your mother share in the same delusion?"

"Yes; they are both deceived, and I will tell you how it came about. In the first place, I have always been shy where Mr. Carson was concerned, and when father would be loud in his praise, although my heart was full of joy and gladness to hear it, I would speak up in your favor. I did so to hide my secret, and now neither could be convinced that it is any other than you. My mother, by the way, is the dearest mother in the world, and she is happiest when making me happy."

Soon Beryl and her escort were alighting at her cousin, Annie Liston's home, and ere long Dick Carson arrived, and a merry evening they spent planning how they would fool the old folks.

The declining sun whispered at length that it was time for Beryl to be homeward bound, and soon the party were driving through the long avenues of shade over the smooth, dusty roads towards Squire Lyman's residence; when they drove up to the gate they could see the old gentleman sitting by the open window indulg-

ing in the quiet companionship of a pipe of tobacco, wreaths of smoke ascending as he looked over his spectacles to note the arrivals.

"I'll swar, old woman, yonder they come back, and as usual, Annie's with Carter; I declare the way Berryl-line goes on will be the the death of me yit. I reckon your Brother Jonathan feels mighty proud his darter is er makin' sich er good ketch."

"My brother don't bother hisself, Zeckariah, with such nonsense."

"That's jest like you, Matildy Jane, jest like you, and hit's as plain as the nose on your face whar Berryl-line gits her foolish ways. She don't take 'em arter her old daddy, I kin tell you, narry bit of it."

"I'm glad—" Mrs. Lyman began.

"Now don't you begin, Matildy Jane, for God's sake don't begin, thar's no end to you when you do begin, and you have mighty nigh talked me to death already."

"Zachariah—" she began again.

"I won't hear you, Matilda Jane, I han't well no how." And he laid his cob pipe in the window as he began a low humming.

Mrs. Lyman smiled but made no response; she had not lived with 'Squire Lyman all these years for nothing.

The next evening it was Dick Carson that sent the old knocker going at the door of 'Squire Lyman, and he was met by the old gentleman himself.

"Good evenin' Mr. Carson, monstrous glad to see you; walk in, take a cheer; a mighty warm day," said the old man in a flurried manner, as he ushered Dick Carson into the parlor and took his seat by him.

"How's craps over your way, young man?" asked the 'squire.

"Very good, 'squire, very good, indeed," he answered, pleasantly.

"Well, I don't wonder, you've got sich a fine farm, wet or dry she produces all the same. I wouldn't keer if I could find sich er one to buy for Berrylline; and sich er good house on it, too, and your pastures. Why it cools me off er hot day to look at your green fields, and your stock—no kentry can boast of any finer."

"Thank you, 'squire, I have tried to make my home a desirable one, and I find much pleasure there, and, like you, I appreciate my surroundings."

"But I'll swar," said the 'squire, seeming suddenly to think of himself. "I forgot you didn't come to see me. I'll send my gal in," and the old gentleman arose to go.

"I am always delighted to meet with your young ladies," answered Mr. Carson, "but 'squire you needn't hurry."

"Well, I guess I had, for you see I know how young folks is, for I've been erlong thar myself."

'Squire Lyman bowed himself out, and in a little while Beryl came tripping in, all aglow with happiness; and swiftly the evening passed as the moments always did when the lovers were thrown together.

It happened a few weeks after this that Byrd Carter was called away on business. There was a little estrangement existing between him and Annie, and Beryl had promised to correspond with him for cousin Annie's sake, and to effect a reconciliation. A few days after Mr. Carter's departure, 'Squire Lyman, as usual, went to town for mail. Beryl saw him coming, and expecting a letter, she ran eagerly out to meet him, as she always did on mail day.

"Oh! father, did you get any letters?" she inquired, as she met him at the steps.

"Yes," he answered, gruffly.

"From whom, father?"

"One from your Aunt Sary Ann, one from your Uncle Billy, one from your Cousin Tom, and one from the devil."

Beryl staid to hear no more, but quickly sped up the walk, convulsed with laughter, for she knew very well who was meant by this complimentary allusion. She did not more than reach her room till she heard her father's voice saying:

"Old woman, what in the name of common sense are we to do with Berylline? Here's a letter from that trifling Carter, and I've er mighty notion not to give it to her. She'll be er marryin' him the next thing."

"Well, if she does," answered the mother. "He's a very good sort of a feller; only he's not so rich as that Carson you sot so much store by. Give her the letter, and don't be so hard on the gal."

"Carter er good sorter feller, indeed! I'll swar if Berylline marries that wretch she shan't have one cent of my property," and he left the room slamming the door so hard that the window came down with a crash, breaking several panes.

"Mother, what did father do with my letter?" asked Beryl as she entered smiling. "Oh! here it is on the table with the others," and taking possession of it she ran away to her room ere the old man returned.

Beryl was not so fortunate, however, in getting to peruse the next epistle from Mr. Carter, even though it eluded the vigilance of her father. It was her elder brother that brought this one from the office, and from

pure mischief, wishing to tease, he held the letter up at arm's length and said:

"Oh! yes, my young lady, here's another messenger of love from your dear little Byrd, and if you don't let me read it, I'll tell father."

A big romp followed, as her most persuasive tones could not induce him to give it to her. But in an unguarded moment she succeeded in stealing it out of his hands; yet, before she could break the seal he was in such close pursuit that to avoid the recapture of the missive she threw it into the fire, where it was instantly consumed.

"Now tell father, if you want to," she said defiantly. In this way she continued to strengthen the belief with them all that Byrd Carter, and none other, was her lover.

The summer was almost spent and 'Squire Lyman was in a perfect fever of excitement. Carter's visits grew more frequent. But Carson still came, and the old man couldn't see why Beryl didn't act sensible and give Carter the mitten.

The last call Mr. Carter made as Beryl's lover he was met at the door by Pat, the little brother, who escorted him to the parlor, and feeling the dignity of the position, proceeded to entertain the young gentleman the best he knew how.

"Say Mr. Carter," he began in rather confidential tones, as he drew a chair near the visitor. "Do you buy ducks? How much do you give for them? Pap says Beryl'll take her ducks to a poor market when she takes 'em to you; but Pap needn't to be cuttin' up, for he never give 'em to Beryl, nohow. Aunt Sary Ann sent 'em to her, and they lay lots of aigs; but Pap said they

was no 'count 'cause they muddy up the pond, and he said he wished they's all dead. But law! you can't depend on Pap—whoever pays the most gits what Pap's got, and don't you forgit it. Say, I've got an old rooster to sell. He's game, too, I tell you—Gee Whilikins! But he's got spurs. Now how much'll you give?"

But alas for Pat! He never knew what Mr. Carter's answer would have been, for he heard Beryl coming, and jumping up, hurriedly said:

"Please don't tell about the ducks, for mother don't allow us to tell tales out of school," and the next moment he had disappeared as Beryl was entering the room.

Ere long Cousin Annie and Dick Carson arrived, and a reconciliation was effected between Mr. Carter and his betrothed Annie. A consultation was held between the happy pairs, and the next day Beryl made a visit to her Cousin Annie. Somehow news was abroad, and reached the ears of 'Squire Lyman, to the effect that Beryl and Byrd Carter had run off to marry, and that Dick Carson and Annie had gone with them. How he walked the floor and raved, saying he would never look on her face again, then burst into a cry and went to bed.

Mrs. Lyman took it quietly and tried to console her husband, but without avail.

On the following day, just as the sun was sinking to rest and tingeing the distant hills with his dying glory, the runaways drove up.

"Oh, Pap, git up! Hurra! Beryl has married Dick Carson, after all; and Cousin Annie has married the duck peddler," said Pat, rushing in, out of breath.

"Git out, youngster; what you talkin' erbout?"

"Oh, it's so; and they're gittin' out of the buggy."

By this time the old man was at the door, in his

sock feet and shirt sleeves, while the old lady stood by his side, peering over her spectacles.

Beryl and Dick came up the walk laughing, and the old man met them on the steps.

“What on airth, Berrylline, made you fool me so?” And he grasped the hand of Carson while he encircled Beryl’s slight form with his arm. “Did you marry him, my gal, jest to please me?” he asked.

“Not exactly,” she replied. “We have loved each other all the time; and it was Cousin Annie Mr. Carter loved. But will you not congratulate them?”

“I guess I will; and Carter, it’s as my old woman said. You *air* er down right good sort er feller, and besides settin’ Beryl and Carson up, I shall not forgit to help you and Annie. Here, old woman, give them all er hearty welcome,” he said, as he drew her towards them. “For as Berrylline was readin’ tother day, in that Shakespeare book, ‘All’s well that ends well,’ and I reckon I’ve made a ‘mighty to do about nothin.’”

A SUMMER'S IDYL.

We sailed down the broad flowing river,—
Two lovers, one calm summer's night,—
The moon softly smiled in her gladness;
We basked in her pale yellow light.

We sailed to the realms of the mystic,
Where Cupid is king of the land;
We drifted with love for our beacon,
We drifted with hand clasping hand.

The steamer moved forward in splendor,
The moon in her brightness shone on,
And I was all thrilled with rapture,—
With joy for the heart I had won.

The river, my life, and the heavens
Seemed studded with stars bright as gold;
Her face was aglow with a radiance
That spoke of the story so old.

So onward we sailed in the moonlight,
Forgetful of time and of place,
Till a cloud had obscured the horizon,—
Fair Luna was hiding her face.

Our steamer is safe at the landing,
Our hearts, too, have anchored at last,
And the future is glowing with sunshine,
Reflecting the joys of the past.

* * * *

KENTUCKY FOLKS

The flowers are blooming in woodlands,
The birds, they are carolling sweet,
The river is rolling in grandeur,
As if the great ocean to meet.

The mock-bird has built in the branches
Among the green leaflets a nest,
We hear the low notes of her night-song
A-hushing her darlings to rest.

We think of a time in the future,
A time when our hearts will be one,
Our lives with a brilliance are gilded
As touched by the slow sinking sun,

We sang with the birds in the evening.
'Twas gladness in woodland and dell,
No cloud overspread the horizon,
No shadow e'er gathered and fell.

* * * * *

I bade her good-bye in the morning,
Read trust in her eyes darkly blue,
"Marguerite, 'tis the hour of our parting,
To me you'll remain ever true?"

A mist now enveloped the river,
And it hid both the forest and sky,
This—this was our last and fond parting,
And this was our last sad good-bye.

Distrust now crept in like serpent,
Distrust which was cruel as death,
And took from me Marg'ret, my idol,
And took from me love and its wealth.

A gloom now hangs over the river,
Our haunts are deserted and still,
And love has gone out of my kingdom,
And comes never more at my will.

IDA VANE'S PROPOSAL.

A ROMANCE OF THE CLAYTON EPIDEMIC.

"Is this your final answer, Ida?"

"It is, Robert, now and forever. As Myrtle's brother I respect you, and as a friend, tried and true, I think of you; but we cannot control our hearts nor our destinies, and forgive me, Robert, if it pains you, when I say I do not, and cannot love you as a woman ought to love the man to whom she has given the first and best fruits of her life."

"If you will only give me the shadow of a hope, I will wait for years and prove to you how undying is my affection," and Robert Irvington's lips quivered as he looked into eyes that gave no response to the great love that shone in his.

"There is no hope," she answered firmly.

"Another stands between us?" he whispered mournfully.

"Yes, one I have loved since childhood's happy day, and to whom I have plighted my troth." She could see with what crushing weight her words fell upon him, and she realized, too, how the man was battling with the strong emotions that swayed his inmost soul. "I would have saved you this blow, Robert," she continued, "had I dreamed you loved me more than a friend. I thought

you knew my wedding day was set, and that I am soon to be the bride of Rick Garnett."

"I do not blame you," he answered wearily. "I alone made the mistake. I loved you so fondly and was so blinded in my love I could but believe that it was reciprocated. I am sorry for us both, but I hope you will be happy with the one you have chosen. As for me, my star has gone down, life holds nothing for me now. I leave this evening for home, and you will promise me, Ida, that if the time ever comes when you are in need of a friend that you will send for me? Remember I will come only as a friend, and will never again trespass on the bounds between us. Do you promise?" and he took her hand and gazed long into the blue depths of her eyes as if he would take her image with him forever.

"I promise, Robert, and the promise shall be sacredly kept," she answered in gentle tones.

A clasp of the hand, a good-bye, and Robert Irvington went down the long walk from whence he had expected so much and gained little.

* * * * *

Ida and Rose Vane had been two very happy girls, surrounded by a pleasant home circle, loving brothers and sisters, and everything that completes the sum of life. But alas for the idols of youth! Their hearts had strayed into forbidden grounds, and the engagements now existing between the fair lasses and their lovers were bitterly opposed by their unrelenting father. Ida had been such a dutiful child all her brief young life that her father could not become reconciled to the great change wrought in her by association with Rick Garnett. Rose had always been wayward, and he was not surprised at her obstinacy.

But sorrows came all too soon to these light-hearted maiden. Death entered their home and it became broken. Father and mother were laid to rest within a month of each other. Ida seemed almost crushed by this bereavement, and for weeks and months grieved for the departed, almost refusing to be comforted. But time heals the deepest wounds. A year after Rose married Henry Marsdon, the old home passed into other hands, and Ida went to reside with her brother Fred, who had married Myrtle Irvington, only sister of Robert Irvington.

Fred and Robert had been school-mates, and during a vacation spent at Robert's home, which was in Hern-don, a town some distance from Clayton, Fred had wooed and won the lovely Myrtle. Robert had been making his sister a visit previous to the opening of our story, and daily association with Ida Vane had awakened within him the purest, sweetest dreams of his life. Mr. Vane favored Robert's suit, and hoped his daughter would be wise enough to appreciate the vast difference in the characters of the two lovers suing for her hand. But alas for the parents' fondest wishes when infatuation takes possession of a girl's heart! Ida had rejected Robert and sent him out into the world hopeless and aimless.

A few months after this the home sorrows came to our heroine, and her wedding day was postponed for an indefinite period. But Rick Garnett was constant in his devotions. They sat on the veranda one June evening in the gathering twilight, watching the stars come out one by one, too happy in each other's presence to break the silence. At length Rick drew nearer, and clasping her hand, said:

"Ida, why have you kept me waiting so long; when will you make me happy? Why don't you name the day? My sister is coming to make me a visit, and her husband's niece, Lida Garrison, is to accompany her. Why not let our wedding be while they are here, in leafy June?"

"Would it make you very happy, Rick?" she asked, looking up into his brown orbs.

"Nothing in all the wide world could bring me such happiness. Do you doubt me, darling? Is that why you ask me such a question?"

"No, I do not doubt you, but I was only thinking what if something should come to part us."

"Nothing shall come between us," he answered in reassuring tones. "Now name our wedding day."

"It shall be when you wish; anything, Rick, to make you happy," she whispered. So again the wedding day was set, and the two lovers parted that night full of bright hopes for the future. The following day brought Rick Garnett's sister and Miss Garrison. From the first time Rick Garnett's eyes beheld Lida Garrison's beautiful face, his approaching marriage and Ida were all forgotten. Beautiful as a dream was this siren, with poetry and symmetry in every movement. Every day found Rick more fascinated with this charmer, and his visits to Ida were fewer and farther between.

But there came a day when a fatal epidemic prevailed in Clayton, when the Garnetts, with their visitors, and others betook themselves to the seashore, the mountains or some other safe retreat, and Rick was gone, too, without even a good-bye to Ida. Among those who fell victims to the direful disease were Rose Marsden, and Robbie Vane, Fred and Myrtle's baby boy. So morning, noon, and night found the faithful Ida divid-

ing her time between the sufferers. If she looked sad and careworn, it was not attributed to Rick's faithlessness; for in the fiery ordeal through which they were passing the whole world seemed forgotten. But down deep in Ida's heart the struggle had been going on, and she had come off conqueror.

"And all that was left of the sweet, sweet dream,
With its thousand brilliant phases,
Was a handful of dust in a coffin laid,
A coffin under the daisies."

Oh, the horrors of an epidemic, when disease and death are in all the land, in the very air we breathe, and there seems no hope of escape! Rose and little Robbie grew worse day by day, and now Fred had to succumb to the fearful scourge, and he, too, lay on a bed of suffering.

So happy had Ida been with the little group, Fred, Myrtle and the children, at Sylvan Shade, that she little dreamed how soon miles of distance, and even death, would roll between her and them.

Myrtle was in ill health, Rose's life was despaired of, and Ida scarcely knew where she was needed most. And after a while the death angel knocked at Sylvan Shade and called for little Robbie, and slowly his life ebbed away.

"Oh! if only Robert would come," moaned Myrtle in her anguish, "but I don't know where a telegram would reach him. He has been traveling ever since he left us more than a year ago."

Ida had been wishing for him too, and more than once his words had come back to her, "If the time ever comes when you are in need of a friend, send for me."

"I need him now, I need him now!" her heart

cried out, and a telegram went flying over the wires to Herndon, trusting to find him there, and fortunately he was there. News of the Clayton scourge had already reached him, and he was making ready to go at once. Yet he read with some surprise these words:

“Robert, I am in need of a friend. Come to
“Ida.”

But the death angel had been before him when he reached Clayton. Little Robbie, the pet of the household, and Robert's namesake, had crossed over into sunlight. Already his remains had been taken to their last resting place. Robert hurried to the cemetery, on reaching which, he found the friends assembled to pay the last sad tribute to Robbie's memory. He saw kneeling by the casket two black-robed figures, whom he recognized as Myrtle and Ida. Through Ida's sobs he caught the words: “Oh, Robbie! Robbie! shall we never, again, hear your sweet voice? Shall I never again see you at the window shouting, ‘Yonder comes Ida?’ Will you stand at Heaven's window and watch for Ida, my angel Robbie?”

Robert went up and knelt between Myrtle and Ida, and clasped the hand of each in his, and they smiled through their tears, and felt that his presence strengthened and sustained them.

“Oh, Robert,” said Myrtle on their return from their burial, “how thankful I am that you have come. How did you know? Did God send you?”

“I guess he did,” was the reply, “and one of his angels sent the telegram.”

“Was it Ida!” she asked.

“Yes, it was Ida.”

"She is indeed, my sister, Robert; and I know not how I could do without her," said Myrtle.

Fred was rejoiced to see Robert, and for a while seemed better. But the warm summer days grew sultrier, and the disease assumed its worst form. Rose was still very low, but the physician now entertained some hopes of her recovery. But poor Fred's life hung on a brittle thread, and superhuman strength seemed given to Robert and Ida as they watched through the long days and nights by his bedside. Ida now saw Robert in his true light—the great, noble, true-hearted man that he was. Never by word or act did he betray the old love that had never burnt itself out. But he was always kind and gentle towards her, yet it was the kindness with which a brother would treat a sister, and nothing more. If he wondered at Rick Garnett's absence now from his rightful place he kept it to himself. And so the days drifted on, Ida still dividing her time, as much as lay in her power, between brother and sister.

Again a wail of anguish went up from Sylvan Shade. A wife weeping for her husband, a sister for her brother. Fred's spirit had passed from earth, and cold and still he lay in the arms of death. A grave was made by little Robbie's, and side by side slept father and son.

Myrtle and Ida felt that their cup of sorrow was filled to the brim, and now their separation was coming. Robert was going to take Myrtle and her little boy, Irving, to live with him.

"Won't Aunt Ida go with us?" Irving kept asking, when preparations were being made for their going. And when they told him she could not go, he began crying:

"Papa, Robbie and Aunt Ida all gone? Oh, Uncle Robert, make Aunt Ida go with us."

How Robert wished he had the right to take her, but, alas! all hope in that direction was dead with him.

"We have been so happy, Ida, and oh, I don't see, with all my sorrows now, how I can live without you," said Myrtle, through her tears, as they stood at the depot, waiting for the train, "but you will come when Rose gets well enough for you to leave her!"

"Yes, sometimes," Ida answered in a trembling voice.

"I wish I could have seen Rose before I left, but the physician said it was not best. Tell her all when she can bear it, and take her to the graves of our loved ones."

The train came rushing in, hurried good-byes were spoken, and with Robert's parting words, "Ida, you will always find a welcome awaiting you at Forest Home," ringing in her ears, she perceived that her darlings were gone and she was standing alone on the platform. Almost blinded with tears, she wended her way back to Rose, passing Sylvan Shade, mournfully silent and tenantless.

Oh, the dreary days that followed, when her pent up anguish longed to burst in turbulent sobs. But Rose's eyes were ever upon her in the days of her convalescence, and her constant inquiries of Fred and Myrtle almost led Ida into a betrayal, strive as she might against it. The physicians had directed that she should not be informed of the death of Fred and Robbie until she was well, lest the shock might prove fatal, and they had strictly guarded every word and every visitor.

Rose had asked so often why Fred and Myrtle had

quit coming to see her, and put her off from time to time, with various answers, till Ida was forced to tell her they were in Herndon with Robert. She would then ask about their letters, if Fred sent any word, etc., until Ida felt almost wicked for having dissembled so much.

Through all this another shadow fell on Ida's heart; Myrtle had written that Robert was sick, and another letter followed, saying it was the fearful disease that had carried Fred away, and that he was in precarious condition; then all communications ceased. Crushed and sad, with a silent prayer ever ascending for Robert's recovery, Ida faithfully performed her duties for Rose. At last joyful news came. Myrtle had written that Robert was out of danger, and she said:

"During his illness, my sister, he thought I was you; he called me Ida all the time."

Did Ida's prayers save Robert? We cannot tell; but we know that she kissed the words where Myrtle said he called her Ida, and a blush suffused her face as she hid the letter.

This never-to-be-forgotten summer glided into dying autumn. September, with fading flowers, passed away, and October with bronze and gold, and purplish haze, was fully come ere Rose had entirely recovered.

Henry Marsden had won a place in Ida's heart by his devotion to Rose, and she compared him with Rick Garnett, wondering not that the scales tipped so heavily in favor of Henry, and wished her father had known him as she knew him now.

Rose and Henry had been out this evening for a drive, the first time she had been able to leave the room. She came in, her face flushed and her eyes brightened, looking the Rose of other days. Seating herself by Ida, she said:

"Tell me, sister, about the epidemic. Who of my friends are gone?"

"Do you think you are able to hear that recital of woe?" asked Ida.

"Oh, yes; tell me, I think of it all the time any way, and it will be no worse to know the truth and end my suspense. Tell me, too, when Fred and Myrtle will come home? We passed Sylvan Shade, this evening, and it looked as silent as a tomb."

Ida turned a shade paler, and a choking sensation came over her. How could she tell Rose that Fred would never come? But, suppressing her emotion, she tried to be brave. She knew the time had come; Rose would be put off no longer, and upon her the task devolved. Ever since the bereavement had come, the puzzling question with her had been, how to break the news to Rose. Now it confronted her and must be done. She could only trust to God for help.

"You were among the first victims, Rose," she began, "and you have been very, very ill. How thankful we ought to feel for your recovery, you can never know, for it seemed at one time that all our loved ones would be taken. Disease, death and mourning were everywhere, and often no one to nurse the sick. I never witnessed such a time in all my life; the houses of our two nearest neighbors held each a corpse the same night.

"Poor Nora Feland's mother, sister and her sister's two children died. Effie Blanton's little Wina; and Mrs. Hayne's mother, went too. Scarcely a family escaped, and oh! it seemed as though Clayton was nothing but a hospital and charnel house. It is so sad, Rose, almost every lady you meet is dressed in deep mourning,

and it seems that there is such a bond of sympathy new between the people throughout Clayton.

Rose was crying softly.

"Don't tell me any more, Ida," she said, "but sing me the new song you said our teacher had written."

Ida went to the organ and played a soft prelude, and her sad, sweet voice floated on the waning twilight as she sang:

"I am watching o'er you, Myrtie,
From this land so fair and bright;
Where all tears are wiped away,
And we never know the night.

"Many have crossed on before us,
Who've given me a welcome home;
At the gate I found our darling,
Wondering if papa would come.

CHORUS:

"I am watching, watching, o'er you.
Through the night and through the day,
I am watching, Myrtie, darling;
Ever watching o'er your way.

"You are now so sad and lonely,
And the cradle's empty too;
But look to heaven, Myrtie, darling;
Its gates will open unto you.

"Our Father'll smooth the rugged pathway,
For your worn and weary feet:
He will lead you, Myrtie darling,
To that bourne, where we shall meet.

"Believe that I'm ever near you,
In your sorrow, in your joy;
I am hovering o'er you, darling,
And watching o'er our little boy.

"Tell him of his father, brother,
Who wait across the jasper sea;
How they listen for his footsteps,
And ever watch, my love, for thee."

Rose heard the last words through and groping her way to Ida, she fell on her knees and buried her face in her sister's lap.

"Oh! I know, Ida. I have felt all the time that something was wrong. Fred and Robbie are gone too. They will never come again. They are in heaven."

Henry Marsden coming in, found the two sisters clasped in each other's arms and mingling their tears in the gathering darkness.

"And, Ida, my own noble Ida," continued Rose in a voice full of tears, "you have borne all this alone. My poor suffering Ida." And she drew the sweet face to her and kissed the quivering lips. "My poor, little darling," and she lovingly stroked her hair.

The following morning Henry took them to the cemetery, and by the graves of "the loved and lost" Ida told Rose all.

"And Rick Garnett, Ida; did he help you through your sorrow?"

"Don't mention his name, Rose, in this sacred place; he is not worthy. Robert Irvington was our hero," Ida responded.

The epidemic had subsided and Clayton was again in a prosperous condition. The refugees had returned, and among them the Garnetts. Not long after their return Rick called to see Ida. She had met him looking more beautiful than ever before. Sorrow had softened her face, and a pathetic tenderness shone in her eyes, while a subdued sweetness lingered around her mouth.

She swept in so stately, so grandly, that the words with which he had intended to greet her died on his lips, while she motioned him to a seat.

"Ida," he began, "I have come to make a confession. I have wronged you, but Lida Garrison led me away from you, and when too late I found her false. She is now married to another. I have

made a woeful mistake. I know that it is you alone that I love. Will you not forgive and reinstate me in your favor? Will you not take me back to your heart again?"

"I forgive you, Mr. Garnett," she answered coldly; "but take you back, never. There is no room in my heart for you. The place you once occupied is now dust and ashes. I could not love you if I would."

"Robert Irvington, I presume, has usurped my place?" he queried scornfully.

"Do not breathe his name," she replied. "You are unworthy. I rejected him once for you and forfeited my father's good opinion. Now do not come back to me, but go!" and she waved her hand toward the door. "It is stifling to breathe the same air that you breathe. Remember that henceforth we are dead to each other."

He passed from her presence, and his last glance at her beautiful face told him his sceptre had departed, his power was gone.

One year has gone by. Again summer is full upon Clayton—the anniversary of the terrible scourge. In all this time Ida has not seen Myrtle, but long, loving letters have been exchanged, and in every one of them Myrtle begs Ida to come. Never a word of Robert only to say he is well, yet how eagerly Ida scans every letter, hoping for one word from the idol who now fills every corner of her heart. She sees him in her dreams by day, and in her dreams by night; sees him by her loved brother's dying bed; hears his comforting words, both to herself and his broken-hearted sister; sees his handsome face and manly form, and with a sigh, she moans:

"Too late; it can never be."

But Rose comes running in with a letter from Myrtle.

"Read it quick, Ida, and tell me we what she says." Ida opens the letter, and a slip of paper falls into her lap—a newspaper clipping. Rose catches it and reads:

"Cards are out announcing the marriage of Robert Irvington and Miss Evelyn Cathidge, to take place September 3d, etc."

Ida heard no more, though Rose read it through. She sat pretending to read her letter, but the lines ran zigzag every way before her eyes.

"Why don't you tell me what Myrtie says?" asked Rose.

"She wants me to come," answered Ida, handing Rose the letter.

"Will you go?"

"I think so," said Ida as she arose and went to her room. She could think of nothing but Robert's marriage. What right had Robert, her Robert, to marry another? All night she wrestled with her heart. Never before had she known what love was. When morning came her mind was fully made up—she would answer Myrtle's letter in person. So a few days after we find her at Forest Home, the guest of Robert and Myrtle. Little Irving is wild with delight, for "Aunt Ida has come." Myrtle and Ida are so happy to be together once more, and have so much to talk about, and Robert is so reserved and so polite.

Nothing is said of the approaching marriage, and Ida does not mention it.

Time seems to be running a race, for the days just fly on eagle's pinions, and Ida will not allow herself to think of the time when she must leave them. She had taken a book, this afternoon, and told Myrtie she was going out for a stroll. Robert was in town, and she left

Myrtie with Irving. The air being sultry, she returned, after a short walk, and threw herself on the divan, in the bay window of the library, the heavy curtains shutting it off from the main room. A gentle breeze came through the open windows, and the lazy hum of insects lulled her into repose. She knew not how long she had slept, when she was awakened by the voices of Robert and Myrtle in the library.

"Oh, Robert, I can't think of Ida's leaving us," said Myrtle, pleadingly. "If only you loved each other, and you would keep her with us always I would be so happy. How can you keep from loving her, Robert?"

Ida held her breath for his answer.

"Can it be possible, sister, that you don't know my secret? Have you never guessed? Have I guarded it so well that you have never detected that I love Ida Vane more than life? She is the only woman I ever loved, and the only woman on earth I ever want to call by the sacred name of wife."

"Tell her, Robert," pleaded Myrtle. "Keep her with us, won't you?"

"No, I will never tell her, Myrtle; my secret shall die with me ere I break my promise to Ida Vane. Once she rejected me. Sent me adrift without even a hope—yet I have loved her through it all. Ah! you cannot know the depth of my affections. How in all my wanderings Ida's sweet face has been ever before me. And now, since she has come to us, my whole life is a struggle lest my heart betray itself. You don't know the wakeful nights I spend—how I try to keep out of her presence, how dismal the future looks with this fruitless love haunting me all the while."

"Did you not know that she had rejected Rick Garnett?"

"I did not," he answered and hope leaped into his eyes. "How long since?"

"She told me that it has been almost a year," Myrtle replied. "Now won't you try your fate for my sake, Robert?"

"No, Myrtle, not for your sake, nor for mine—though I shall go to the grave with the memory of Ida Vane dearer to me than life itself. My sacred promise to her shall not be broken. I told her I would not trespass. I have not—I will not."

Strange words, Ida thought for a bridegroom soon to be—yet she heard all, but she never knew how she found her way out of the bay window, and knelt at Robert's feet.

"Oh, Robert," she cried. "Will you force me to propose? Unmaidenly as it may seem to you, yet, after what I have heard, I could not let you wed another without first telling what is in my own heart."

"Wed another?" Robert asked in surprise. "Can it be that you did not know I had a cousin Robert, and it was a notice of his wedding, Myrtie sent you?" He saw the happiness that lit up her face, and taking her hands, he drew her to his side as he said:

"Ida, darling, do you mean it? Can so much happiness be for me? Do you love me, precious Ida?"

"Even as much as you love me, Robert; and I don't know how, or when it came to me. But you know we cannot control our hearts nor our destinies," and she looked up archly into his face. He remembered those words and visions of that morning long ago flitted for a moment across his sight. But she continued: "When you were so ill, a prayer was in my heart all the time for your recovery. When I thought you were going to marry, I

felt that I could not give up until I had seen your loved face, and heard your dear voice once more."

"My precious darling, my own little Ida, we have both suffered, but now you are mine, mine for all time," and he drew her closer as he pressed a loving kiss on her lips. Myrtie stole out of the room to weep out her joy, while little Irving came up to Robert, saying:

"We'll keep Aunt Ida always now, won't we, Uncle Robert?"

"Always, my little man, always." he said, as he patted the cheeks of the little urchin.

"Don't be too sure that you will keep me always, Robert, for you know I must go back to tell Rose of our happiness."

"I cannot spare you for long, my darling girl," was the answer. "For Forest Home longs to claim its mistress, and Myrtle longs for her sister, and Robert longs for his wife."

But they allowed Ida to return to Rose to make ready for her nuptials, and after the wedding Henry and Rose returned with Robert, Ida and Myrtle to spend the summer.

Myrtie and Ida are reunited and Robert Irvington is the happiest of men with sweet Ida Vane by his side.

THE DROUTH OF EIGHTY-SEVEN.

A LA HIAWATHA.

O, the dry and sultry summer!
O, the sad and gloomy Autumn!
With the fading of the flowers,
And the withering of the grasses.
Hot the sun shone o'er the landscape,
Over all the lakes and rivers,
Parching all the rolling prairies,
Scorching all the fields and meadows,
Hushing up the singing brooklets,
Drying up the creeks and rivers,
Leaving all the fish to perish.

Then throughout the darkening forest
Rang the thrilling cry of "Fire!"
Roused the men and armed for battle!
Stalwart men, and women, fragile,
Battled with the fiery demon,
Through the night that knew no slumber.

Swift before it fled the wild deer,
Fled the wild cat and the panther
From the swamps—their hiding places.

Still the flames crept o'er the leaflets,
O'er the fallen leaves and stubble,
O'er the dry and withered grasses,
Ever creeping surely onward,
Ever leaping higher and higher,

Like a madman in his fury,
Like a wild beast from his lair.

Then the air was filled with vapor,
With a dense, dark, bluish vapor
That o'erspread the fields and woodlands
Villages and towns and cities;
And the sun glared red and thirsty
Through the clouds of smoky vapor.

How the birds and beasts lay panting,
With their tongues all parched and bleeding,
And their eyes blood-shot and sunken!
And their cries were plaintive, pleading,
"Give us water, water, water."

But the flames still cruel, craving
Sped on towards the towns and cities.
Sped on roaring, crackling, rushing
With a wave of desolation.

And the sun still red and glaring
Gave no promise to the people.
Ever dryer, dryer, dryer
Grew the parched earth, like a desert,
Till the deep wells e'en were dried up.
Then the people, famished, cried out,
With the wailing of the forest,
With the beasts and birds, they cried out:

"Give us water, water, water."
Then the wind took up the wailing,
And above the crashing, burning,
And the fire-bells ringing, clanging,
Came the cry of "Water, water!"
With a poisonous smoky vapor
Came a famine and a fever,
And it ranged through town and country,

Filling all the air with anguish,
To the palace and the hovel
Came the thirsting, burning fever,
And with it th' avenging angel,
Reaping as a harvest reaper!

To a cot beside a river,
Close beside a sluggish river,
Came the devastating famine,
Back and forth the father wandered,
To the village, to the river;
"Give us food," he cried in anguish,
"Give us food or we must perish."
But the air grew thicker, denser,
And the night winds only mocked him
With the echo, "We must perish!"

Then the fever came and lingered,
Lingered long within the cottage,
O'er the wife so fondly cherished,
O'er a child as bright as sunshine,
And the father saw them fading,
Day by day he saw them dying,
Wasting with the burning fever,
And with all-consuming hunger.
Came the Angel, Death, and hovered
O'er the couch of the beloved ones,
O'er the couch of little Sunshine.
Then the child, so pale and haggard,
Stiffening in death's icy fetters,
Whispers through lips cold as marble:
"Only sing one sweet song, mother."
And the mother, trembling, dying,
Sang as only angels sing,
"Rocks and storms we'll fear no more

When on that eternal shore;
Drop the anchor, furl the sail,
We are safe within the vale.”
And the winds took up the chorus,
Gave it to the murmuring river;
Back the river to the forest
Sent the echo, wild and weird:
“Drop the anchor, furl the sail
We are safe within the vale.”
By the bedside stood the father,
And he saw the long gray shadows
Stealing slowly o’er the dying.
Stood he there in mutest anguish—
Stood he there and cried to Heaven;
And the stars gleamed through the casement,
And the moon so faint and dismal,
Looked down sad and pitying on him.
Then the watcher in his sorrow
Poured his soul to God in prayer:
“Stay thy mighty hand, O! Father,
Lift from me this heavy burden,
Spare to me my only treasure,
Let this bitter cup pass from me.”
From the silence came no answer
But the agonizing echo:
“Let this bitter cup pass from me.”
Humbled now, in meek submission,
Prays he once again: “Dear Savior,
To thy home, the golden city,
Take me with my own, my darlings;
God, in pity hear my prayer.”
And, our Father sent a summons
For the soul so tired and weary,

Home he called him with his dear ones
Where no famine and no fever—
Naught but sunshine ever enters.

* * * * *

Such was but an instance only
Of the wasting of the famine,
Of the pestilential fever,
That the drouth of Eighty-seven
Brought upon the stricken people.
Hundreds more were sore afflicted
Hundreds more to death fell victims,
But at last our pitying Father
Sent the rain in gentle showers,
Sent the rain on field and forest,
Sent the rain on town and city,
Ended all the fires and fever,
Caused the land to smile in plenty
Made the people thankful, happy.

* * * * *

Learn a lesson, O! ye people,
From the drought of Eighty-seven.
Learn a lesson of submission,
Learn to trust your Heavenly Father,
Learn to say as did the psalmist,
“I will trust him though he slay me.”
Though his face seems sometimes hidden
He will ne’er forsake his children.
Though his objects none can fathom
Yet in goodness doth he all things.

DONNA VENITA.

A STORY OF SAN JACINTO BAY.

CHAPTER I.

MORGAN'S POINT.

"The long moss trailing from the trees
Floats silently upon the breeze
Like sadful funeral draperies.

"Southward I hear the muffled beat
Of waves that come with restless feet
And lave the shore where burning heat

"Has bent the marsh grass lowly down
And changed its green blades into brown.
The stars peer from the northern crown

"And watch eve's purple fade to gray
As over San Jacinto Bay
The drowning sea puts out the day."
—*Ellen L. Sale.*

A long line of beach meeting the blue sea to the southward. A curve to the north and northeast where the rippling waves of San Jacinto Bay kiss the northern shores. A ship-canal crossing the land from bay to bay like a shining thread of silver as the dying sun swung lower and lower over the bosom of the deep, lighting up the waters far and wide with a glint of sunshine and a gleam of pearls. A restless tide, and soft, low winds. This was Morgan's Point, a southern tract of land lying

between San Jacinto Bay on the northeast and Galveston Bay on the south and east.

Marguerite Van Dorn caught her first glimpse of this enchanted spot, as, with spy glass in hand, she stood on the guards of the little steamer, looking far to the seaward, and then across the bay on whose glassy waters they were sailing. Looming up in the distance on the shores to the northeast a quaint, old building, not unlike to some ancient Spanish castle, met her view. Not far away on San Jacinto Bay a tiny bark rode at anchor. A maiden stood in the swaying boat—her long, black tresses falling loose at the sport of the wind; a scarf of crimson and gold was wound turban-like around her well shaped head, with its loose end of glittering fringe floating at her side; one hand screened her eyes, and peering into the distance, she stood eager, expectant.

"Oh! for an artist's skill that I might transmit to canvas that picture—the maiden, the sea and sky," exclaimed Miss Van Dorn, lost in admiration. The captain coming up at the moment, said:

"I see that you have already discovered the chief attraction at Morgan's Point, and I am not surprised, for nature and art have combined to make it a picture that has charmed more than one. Around yonder castle lingers the legendary lore of centuries, and its title—Castle De Leon—breathes of Spanish heroes. The occupant of that boat is Donna Venita, and that," pointing up the bay, across from where the little boat rode at anchor, toward a marble shaft gleaming in the setting sun, "is a monument dedicated to the sea. I told you," he continued, "that Morgan's Point held a romance and a mystery; and across the bay, in Castle De Leon dwell, in all their regal splendor, a prince and princess."

But they were steaming into port and she did not reply to the captain's words, for she was thinking that perhaps she might soon have it in her power to solve the mystery, if a mystery existed in this fair Eden.

Marguerite Van Dorn had been spending several months with friends in Houston, but now it was summer in the Lone Star State and those who had been reared beneath the genial skies of a Kentucky home found the tropical rays of a Southern sun too ardent for their weary bodies and overtaxed brains, so a trip to Morgan's Point was planned and carried into execution.

It was a bright day in July when the party of pleasure-seekers boarded the gay little steamer, Eugene, and set sail for their destination. Down the sluggish stream their boat skimmed along until the slow moving waters had widened into a sparkling river, with magnolias and a few lingering flowers blooming on its margin. On they sped until the river had widened into San Jacinto Bay.

Thrice blessed is he who can give to exhausted humanity a fresh impulse of vitality, or awaken a feeling of merriment or a sense of the ludicrous in hearts that are weary and oppressed. Such a man was the Eugene's captain, and in his peculiar, reverberating laugh the party found keen enjoyment, especially when he inquired of his passengers, in the blindest of tones, if they had any bear grass, which, in Kentucky parlance, Miss Van Dorn understood to mean "Old Bourbon." But the captain was not wholly made up of laughter and song, and, in one of his sober moments he had vaguely hinted to Miss Van Dorn of a mystery haunting the shores of Morgan's Point.

His words came to her with double force as she

stood on the guards of the little steamer, entranced with the scene before her, oblivious of her surroundings. The captain and all were forgotten until he again came to her side and smilingly said :

“Miss Van Dorn, this is Morgan’s Point, and your friends are going to land. Will you ferret out the mystery here and make me the hero of your story, or will you go back to Houston?”

Fully aroused, she made some repartee to the jocular captain and they were soon safely landed and ere long domiciled in their cottage on the hill, where the waters of Galveston Bay to the southeast spread out as far as the eye could see, dotted here and there with steamers, yachts, sloops, schooners and fishing smacks. Back from the house extended the forest just as it had stood for ages, unbroken even by the woodman’s axe. Dark almost with clinging vines and long, grey moss heavily draping the trees, as if it delighted in the title, “Curtain of Death,” bestowed on it by the natives.

Everything here had a charm for Marguerite Van Dorn, and intoxicated with nature’s beauties, she drank deeper and deeper from her fountains. The ever restless sea, the dim, shadowy forest, surf bathing, etc., all were as invigorating as they were fascinating. Two weeks had gone by and every day had found her looking with longing eyes toward Castle de Leon. So much had she heard of the prince, his wonderful library, his rare collections from land and sea, that she thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night. But not once since the evening of their arrival had she been favored with a sight of either the prince or the princess.

CHAPTER II.

PRINCE AND PRINCESS.

"It is morn on the bay—
And night's dark curtain is uprolled,
All the grey east has turned to gold."

Marguerite Van Dorn wanders deep into the forest and ever and anon she catches glimpses of San Jacinto Bay. She can hear the waves break on the shore and in the distance she hears the splash, splash of oars. Nearer and nearer is the sound borne across the waters and through the sighing moss—now she hears distinctly a sad, sweet voice singing—

"Juanita, Juanita, ask thy soul if we should part?"

She is at the edge of the forest, not far from the monument, and coming toward her is the tiny bark with the same graceful figure and scarlet turbaned head that she had wished for an artist's skill to paint, upon her first view of Morgan's Point.

It is the princess. The boat is made fast and with a Spanish "good-morning" she is by Miss Van Dorn's side. Where had she seen those clear cut features, that olive complexion, and those liquid orbs? Memory went flitting back through a waste of years in search of some one, she knew not whom. This was only the beginning of a pleasant association. She found Donna Venita talented, educated, cultivated and refined, and in every way a congenial companion—as much English as French or Mexican. She had been educated in England, but received finishing touches in Paris and completed her musical course in Berlin. Honors had been paid her in

the highest European courts and often Miss Van Dorn found herself soaring in fancy with Donna Venita in ancient Mexico, beneath her sunny skies, or in some of the grand cities of the old world, sometimes they were in Rome or Athens, or, perhaps in Venice—bride of the sea—gliding in gondolas through her silent streets; or sailing on old ocean in search of new adventures. There were no more lonely strolls for Miss Van Dorn through jungle-like forests. Donna Venita was ever with her, sailing on the bay or wandering on the beach. This evening they stood by the monument and Miss Van Dorn read the inscription aloud:

“Sacred to the memory of little Leon.”

She stood wondering, dreaming, when Donna Venita broke the silence.

“Do you know, Miss Van Dorn, this little Leon in some way seems connected with my life? I cannot understand it, and I tell Don Carlos that he knows more than he confides to me. I also tell him that I believe he comes here to do penance, but why he should I cannot imagine; yet when the summers come around and our ‘outing’ is planned he always says he will go to Castle de Leon; then he looks as sad as death and as grave. Here we have come almost as far back as I can remember, and for days after we reach here he paces the sands, always with that mournful expression in his face and a strange gleam in his eyes.

“Don Carlos, or the prince, as the native call him here, is only my guardian. He has always kept a companion for me, and he has been mother, father, brother and sister to me. All I am I owe to him. I know nothing whatever of my parentage.” She drew nearer Miss Van Dorn’s side and laid her hand

caressingly in hers. The latter looked down into the dark eyes, softened by unshed tears, and again visions of another flitted before her. Somewhere she had seen those eyes—that face. Just then a yacht came toward them, and a new beauty lighted up the girl's countenance.

“Don Carlos is coming,” she said, “and for us, Miss Van Dorn. I have sung your praises so much he is anxious to meet you.”

The boat came to shore and soon Don Carlos, the prince, stood before them. Miss Van Dorn was introduced to his highness, and was invited out for a sail, and over to Castle De Leon. Oh! that delightful sail on San Jacinto Bay, with the musical tones of the prince falling on her ears like murmuring waters, and with the hand of the princess clasped lovingly in hers. Again she was haunted by those eyes, not unlike to orbs she had seen in a far away past. Who was it! Where had she seen them? again and again she asked herself, but no solution to the puzzling question could she gain.

“Castle de Leon? Fairy land!” she could only exclaim when she gazed on the flowers, the fountains playing in the sunlight and the birds of every clime singing to the soft, low music of the waters. The perfume of orange groves, bending with golden fruits, the library, the museum. One evening only created in her a thirst, a longing that would not be satiated, for the pleasures of Castle de Leon; and the inmates were most happy to have her with them. Other members of the party were invited to the castle, but the friendship existing between Miss Van Dorn and Donna Venita seemed strongest, and Don Carlos was only contented when contributing to the happiness of the little princess.

Miss Van Dorn had spent a great portion of her time at Castle de Leon with the friends to whom she had become so much attached, and she had observed that her host was always gentle and tender toward Donna Venita, yet it was only the loving tenderness that a father would bestow on a child. But of late the princess had exhibited a coldness toward Don Carlos—a coldness that showed its iciness in every movement, and a vague unrest shone in her eyes. Miss Van Dorn knew that something unusual was going on in the girl's nature; a something that was transforming the light-hearted, winsome lass into a sad-eyed woman. But their stay at Morgan's Point was drawing to a close. Summer had glided into autumn, and the following morning would find the pleasure-seekers homeward bound.

For the last time, perhaps, Miss Van Dorn stood by the wave-kissed shore of San Jacinto Bay, and read on the marble shaft, "Sacred to the Memory of Little Leon." Again she heard the oars and saw the fluttering of a red scarf—the princess was coming. Soon the latter was by her friend's side.

"Miss Van Dorn," she said, in mournful tones, "I am going to leave Castle de Leon; I am going to leave Don Carlos; out into the world I am going, fighting against fate. Don't ask me any questions; I can only tell you that I am wicked, ungrateful. Don Carlos gratifies my every wish, surrounds me with every luxury wealth can procure, but that does not satisfy the cravings of the heart, nor does it bring happiness. I am going on the Eugene with you to Houston. I have money, Don Carlos keeps my purse well supplied, but I shall only take enough to pay my way until I can get employment; I cannot live on my guardian's bounty any

longer. I am going disguised, and when I reach my destination I shall seek a situation at once. I am educated—I can do something. And now good-bye until the morrow;" and before Miss Van Dorn could reply Donna Venita was gone in the boat, gliding across the bay. She stood watching the light craft until the princess seemed a mere speck, and then she wended her way homeward with the bewildering thought running rife in her brain, what was to be the future of Donna Venita?

True to her word, a little black-robed figure representing a sister of charity, sat by Miss Van Dorn's side on the little steamer as they sailed up to Houston. Fortunately, a few days after their arrival Donna Venita found employment and went out on her duties. As with tearful eyes Miss Van Dorn clasped the little princess to her bosom, she wondered when and where would be their next meeting, nor was she prepared for what awaited a little further on.

Soon after the departure of Donna Venita a letter came from Don Carlos telling Miss Van Dorn that he was indeed bereft; his little girl had fled from his protecting care—none knew whither. He also sent the note that she had left for him. Donna Venita had wept when she wrote it. Don Carlos' tears had fallen on its snowy page, and now Miss Van Dorn's tears were falling like rain-drops as she read through a mist the following words:—

"MY BEST OF FRIENDS:—You don't know how my heart is breaking, breaking, when I think I have looked on your face for the last time and how my tears are falling for you in your desolation, when you find your little girl is gone forever. Do not seek me. It is best that I go, and some day I hope to find that mother whose kisses once pressed my lips. Good-bye, good-bye. How can I write my last farewell! But it must be so. It must be so.

"DONNA VENITA."

Miss Van Dorn answered with a letter of sympathy, and did she do wrong not to betray the little princess? She had pledged her word to the little creature, and she could not break it. So Don Carlos drifted on believing her both innocent and ignorant of the fate of Donna Venita. He had written her that he would search the world over to find her, and Miss Van Dorn believed that he would one day be successful.

CHAPTER III.

LOVED AND LOST.

L. & C.
Back through the ceaseless flow of eighteen years we will retrace our steps. It was in busy, picturesque Washington, and governors, ambassadors, M. C's., senators, etc., had come to do honor to the president of the United States. The city was at its gayest, and it was the eve of one of the many receptions given at Senator Carville's. A couple strolled leisurely on the broad balcony of the palatial mansion.

With rich olive complexion, deep, dark eyes, full of a lurid light, the lady leaned on her companion's arm drinking in all the poetry and song breathed in his musical tones and liquid orbs. This was Irma Carville, second daughter of Senator Carville, and her companion was Leon Bernardo, son of the Mexican ambassador.

"Would the senorita like to make her home where it is always summer? Where the flowers never cease to bloom, the birds never weary of song and the trees are ever bending with luscious, golden fruits?" asked Leon Bernardo, as he paused in the onward march and looked down into the dark eyes, already under the magnetic influence of his own burning gaze.

"Ah, I should fancy that I had reached the vale of Cashmere," she replied. "But it would be so unlike to our clime I fear that the northern maiden would be like a flower transplanted, and would droop and die."

"Not if transplanted by the loving hands of one whose life, whose hope, whose joy, all centered in the treasure he would bear away to his sunny southern home. It is a land, my lady, of quaint old buildings, traditions, love and song. Soft-voiced maidens list to their lover's lute, and knights kiss the hands of the veiled senoritas as they worship at the shrine of true devotion. Are we, who are reared beneath tropical skies, to blame for our passions? We learn lessons of love from the birds and flowers; we inherit jealousy and thirst for revenge from our ancestors. But with you to guide me, to inspire within me a desire for a higher life, to awaken within me noble aspirations, the fierce passions of jealousy and hatred might never be aroused. I dislike these traits in our people which we, perhaps, inherit to a greater degree than other nations, and which I have seen wreaked on victims to the fullest extent. Yet is our belief—a principle with us—if we are once betrayed, to be revenged, if the result be death both to the avenged and the avenger. The man who seeks not revenge falls in caste with his fellowmen. Our honor is at stake, be the offender man or woman."

A slight tremor ran through Irma Carville's frame. Was the night air chill after coming from the heated rooms, or was she thinking of the two-edged sword with which she was playing? There was fascination in the voice, face and eyes of the Spaniard that led her on and on until he had declared himself and she had accepted, and a ring with glittering stones and some Mexican devices gleamed on her finger.

The season was almost over and Irma Carville had reigned queen of Washington society. So far she had been true to her Spanish lover, but the curtain rose on another scene in her life's drama. Harry Vontresce, a lover whom she had left in her own native town, and to whom she had given her first love, appeared on the scene. She had no engagement with Leon Bernardo that afternoon, but he often came with his guitar and together they whiled away the evening hours. Harry and Irma were in the conservatory at her Washington home and Irma was telling him of the gay season.

"And such a conquest, Harry, as I have made!" she said. "Do you see this ring? It was presented by the Mexican ambassador's son. You won't be angry, Harry, when I tell you that I promised to wed him? You see I have been very aspiring. I did not know what new honors might await me a little further on. I thought, perhaps, he might turn out a prince, as the fairy stories go, but here you have come and spoiled all." And her silvery laugh grated harshly on the Spaniard's ears, as he stood without, clenching his guitar until a string snapped.

"What was that, Harry?"

"Perhaps it was one of the Mexican's heartstrings," and they both laughed. "You have treated your betrothed, Harry Vontresce, pretty shabbily, Miss Carville, and what if I should play the part of deserter?" he said playfully.

"Now, Harry, it was all in fun and you will forgive me," she returned poutingly.

"All right, my darling, we will kiss and make up," and rollicking, warm-hearted Harry Vontresce and fickle Irma Carville little dreamed of the heart, crushed and

bleeding, only a few steps distant, thirsting for the revenge his race calls honor.

Leon Bernardo had expected to find his lady love alone in the conservatory, when voices arrested his attention. He heard enough to know that he was the dupe of an American girl and turning on his heels, he vowed vengeance on her. He left Washington without again seeing the girl who had played him false. And ere long she, too, had gone to her northern home and wedded Harry Vontresce.

Five years had gone by and their union had been blessed by the gift of a little girl with Irma's face, hair and eyes. They called her Leon Bernardo Vontresce, for Irma had declared that this was the only reparation that she could make for the way in which she had treated her Spanish lover and Harry, always happiest when complying with her wishes, readily consented. Little Leon was then three years old and as beautiful as a picture.

Irma's health was declining, and her physician advised a change of climate, and to Morgan's Point, where they could get the delightful breeze from the Gulf coast, they repaired. They had been there for weeks and Irma was much improved in both spirits and health. They had found the salt-water baths quite beneficial and were charmed with their surroundings. Morgan's line of steamers were plying the waters from the Texas coast to New York, and they found something constantly to interest and amuse. Since the time of which we write railroads have found their way all over this grand old state, causing a suspension of this great steamship line. But a large ship had put in an appearance at that time, called Irma, the American queen. Harry had spoken to

the captain of this magnificent brig bearing his wife's name, and he, in turn, was invited by the captain to come on board and take tea with them. Harry and Irma with little Leon, accepted the kind invitation and were entertained most royally. Where had Irma seen the captain? There was something in his voice that thrilled her as in the days of girlhood. But it could not be—this man who wore spectacles and a long, grey beard—she dispelled the thought. Days wore on and still the great craft hugged the southern coast. It was near the close of a summer's afternoon; all day the air had been sultry, and now the clouds were gathering for a storm. The waves were tossing restlessly and their ceaseless beat on the shore, with the distant roar of the Gulf, had a weird, ominous sound.

Janet, the maid, had taken little Leon for a stroll on the beach, a pretty flower had tempted her to leave the child a moment; a little further on she went, glancing back ever and anon to see that the little girl was safe. Janet was out of sight, but, of course, Leon would remain until she returned. Tired of waiting, little Leon went nearer the bay. She took off one shoe and stocking. The water almost kisses her feet. A tiny wave came and she clasped her little hands, crying: "Pretty water! pretty water!"

Not far away landed a small boat, and a man leaped on shore. He looked around suspiciously. Leon ran to meet him crying:

"Pretty boat, take Leon ride." The man took her in his arms, muttering:

"At last! at last! Revenge is sweet." And he was soon in the boat, speeding on towards the ship that lay at anchor in the dusky twilight of Galveston Bay.

Janet had just time to return for her charge ere the storm broke with wildest fury over Morgan's Point. Night settled down like a pall over the maddened waters, and naught could be seen through the midnight blackness but a beacon light from Red Fish Bar, that seemed to touch both sea and sky.

No trace of little Leon could be found save the little shoe and stocking, though a search was made through the driving storm for the lost child. The following morning dawned bright and beautiful on the bay, and far out at sea sailed the gallant ship on toward her destination.

After a fruitless search, they gave up all hope, believing little Leon had found a grave in the waters of San Jacinto Bay. Broken-hearted Irma found no more pleasure at Morgan's Point. Back to her old home in Washington city she longed to go, and soon they were homeward bound, leaving Texas and its allurements far behind. They had a monument erected to their darling, and there it stood, lone and silent, while the surging waters sang a requiem at the base, as its spire pointed Heavenward.

CHAPTER IV.

WRONGS ALL RIGHTED.

Two years had passed since Donna Venita and Miss Van Dorn parted in Houston. Many changes had been wrought, and in the panorama of scenes through which they had passed, the two friends lost sight of each other. Miss Van Dorn was once more in Washington city. The season was very gay and one of the reigning belles was a Miss Vontresce. A grand reception was to be given

in her honor, and all Washington was astir over a visiting count. Miss Van Dorn attended the reception, and when Miss Vontresce entered a friend touched Miss Van Dorn's arm and whispered: "The new beauty." She turned and met the eyes of Donna Venita fixed upon her. She was soon by Miss Van Dorn's side, and unobserved they stole into the conservatory and, clasped in each others arms, wept out their joy. Footsteps were heard. Miss Van Dora's friend entered and introduced Count Bernardo. Will wonders ever cease? It was Don Carlos.

Flushed and trembling, he and Donna Venita gazed at each other in mute astonishment. He opened his arms and Miss Van Dorn saw the deep, unspeakable love shining in the eyes of each. Tremulously, like the chords of a broken lute, he whispered:

"Come, my life, my bride," and Donna Venita went to him with hands outstretched in the shimmering light. He held her there and rained kisses on her eyelids, lips and cheeks.

The princess had much to tell them. Mrs. Lamar, the lady whom she accompanied from Houston to New York, was a sister to Mrs. Vontresce, and through Mrs. Lamar's influence she secured a position as governess in the family of Mrs. Vontresce, to whom she grew so dear, and whom she resembled so much that she was adopted as their own daughter.

And with the princess close beside her, as in the olden time at Morgan's Point, Miss Van Dorn asked:

"But tell me, my little friend, why you deserted the Castle de Leon, and left the guardianship of Don Carlos, your best of friends?"

"Can you not guess, Miss Van Dorn?" she answered

blushingly. "For love's sake. A time came to me when I no longer loved Don Carlos as a father, but a strange infatuation took hold of me. I could not live in his presence day after day betraying his friendship, for I believed that he loved me only as a sister."

"You did not know my heart," answered Don Carlos. "But I have a story to relate first and then I will tell you how much I loved you in those days. I would like to see Mr. and Mrs. Vontresce." Donna Venita brought them in and introduced Don Carlos as her guardian.

"You do not recognize me," he began, "and it is well, perhaps, that you do not. But listen to what I have to say, and voices from a dead past will tell you who I am. Back, back through the darkest years of my life you will go with me—when I was led on by a siren to the very threshold of perdition, when I crouched at her very feet a mere slave to be scorned, trampled on and rejected. But ten thousand fires were smouldering in my bosom, and the fiercest of all was revenge. Back to the brightest years of your life, Irma Carville, we will also go; when a wee darling nestled in your bosom and was twined around every tendril of your heart. Back when Irma, the American Queen, haunted the Texas coast; back to the time when sorrow, like a cloud of darkness, settled upon your heart—when you were childless. Out on the American Queen sailed your child. You had broken my heart, and I wanted to break yours just when every fibre of your being was interlaced with hers. I bided my time. Through the newspapers I kept informed of your whereabouts — distinguished people have a knack, you know," he said ironically, "of getting their movements reported in the newspapers."

Irma Vontresce heard all with a strange mingling

of fear, remorse, sorrow and joy; saying, like one in a dream,—

“You are—”

“Leon Bernardo, step-son of the Mexican ambassador, also the rejected Spaniard,” he answered.

“But—my child—oh! in pity tell me of our little girl,” she pleaded.

“Do not your hearts tell you that she is your little Leon?” and he pointed to Donna Venita.

“Hear me through,” continued Don Carlos. “I am not a Spaniard, as you believed, nor a prince, Miss Van Dorn, as the natives of Morgan’s Point would have me, but I am of English birth and am in reality a count. My father, after moving to Mexico, lived only a brief while. My mother married the Mexican ambassador. No children blessed the union, and my mother’s husband was to me a devoted father. He gave me his name and I bore it until you made me a wreck. Then I became a sea captain and was called Don Carlos. I was brought up in Mexico and believed the Mexicans to be my people, and thought I was seeking honor when I sought revenge. No father could have done more for a child than I have done for yours, save to give her a father’s love. But remorse did its work. What I at first exulted over became a great sorrow to me. Yet your little girl had a mission—she made me a better man, and I feel that my life is purer for having come in contact with hers. I intended to tell her of her parents and the wrong I had committed, and to go with her in search of them, but she could not wait.”

“I wronged you most cruelly, Count Bernardo, and I plead for pardon,” said Irma Vontresce, as she rose and extended her hand.

"I forgive, as I hope to be forgiven," he said, as he clasped her hand. "You do not doubt that Donna Venita is your little Leon? if so I have more proof. The little shoe and stocking," and he opened a casket. "Also these pictures," exhibiting a medallion, encrusted with pearls, containing Irma and Harry's pictures. "You remember this ring?" he said, pointing to a ring with the strange Mexican device, and suspended from the chain which was attached to the medallion.

Ah, Irma remembered only too well, and the fatal evening she clasped the chain around the child's neck.

"Now the greatest trial of all is coming," said the count. "I love Donna Venita, little Leon, more than I once loved you. I love her with a love that passes all understanding, but I have guarded it so well that she left me believing that I knew her secret and did not reciprocate her affection. Even Miss Van Dorn did not know that I loved this little maiden! Now, Donna Venita, always Donna Venita to me, decide which it shall be, mother and father, or Leon Bernardo."

"Oh! Don Carlos, my only love, I cannot give you up." She went to his side, and he put his arms around her and held her in a close embrace.

"I know you love me, my little countess," he said, "but it is best to give you up to your parents for a year. Go into society, perhaps you may find some one better suited to your years, if so I will yield you into his sacred keeping. I will not write to you during my absence; I will bind you with no promise, but at the expiration of that time I will come back and if your heart is still true to me I shall claim you."

Count Leon Bernardo took his departure and no more was heard of him. Donna Venita led a gay, fash-

ionable life. She had many suitors, but to all she gave the same answer, and a weary longing was in her eyes all the while. The year soon sped by and brought the Count's return. There was a grand wedding and a trip to Europe; Miss Van Dorn, Harry and Irma accompanying them. Then back they came to Castle de Leon, but across San Jacinto Bay gleamed no marble shaft. The natives said a terrible storm had swept across Morgan's Point, and the monument sacred to the memory of little Leon had gone out to sea.

HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL.

'Twas evening, the summer lay dying,
And autumn with banners unfurled,
In purple, and scarlet, and golden,
Made brilliant a beautiful world;
The mountains loomed grey in the distance
And misty were river and dell,
The sunset gleamed bright thro' the forest,
As weaving a magical spell.

The twilight stole soft thro' the casement,
And shadows lay deep on the floor,—
An angel now paused on the threshold,
Whose wings swept the wide-open door;
For weeks we had watched our pale suff'rer,
With ever a prayer on our lips,—
What suppliant knoweth prayer's answer,
Who the cup of bitterness sips?

The death angel stood by the bed-side,
And kissed down her eye-lids to sleep,
Then over the dark waters bore her
And left us in sorrow to weep;
Oh! the heart-throbs, the anguish, the pining
For the face now so cold and so still,
For the babe that had lain in our bosom,
That went at the dear Father's will.

Our off'ring we laid on God's altar,
With anguish no mortal can tell,
But we felt his strong arms were around us,
And knew that he doeth things well;
We laid our weak hands in the Master's,
And gave him our darling to keep,
We knew in his arms she was resting,
For he giveth his loved ones sleep.

All hail to the name of the Master,
The Master thorn-crowned and oppressed,
Who conquered the grave and its terrors,
And gave to his loved ones rest;
Our heart-strings vibrate with a sadness,
Our cradle is empty to-day,
He sendeth us blessings and sorrows,
He giveth, He taketh away.

The forests are ablaze with a splendor,
With treasures of em'r'ld and gold;
But our darling is safe in that city
Whose glories have never been told;
He gives to the faithful his promise,
To those who have passed thro' the strife,
With faith for their anchor have trusted,
From death they shall pass unto life.

*TO MRS. ROSA MONTGOMERY HAYS.

MARGUERITE'S HOME-COMING.

When Marguerite Prescott took upon herself the marriage vows and became the wife of Albert Norton the wise people of the little town of Pemberton shook their heads ominously and said it was the worst day's work she had ever done. A few brief years would end her career, and, a broken hearted wife, she would find an early grave. Did she not know the man to whom she was bartering her young life? Had no friend told her of his life of dissipation, and how, more than once, he had seen snakes in his boots, for had he not been a victim of delirium tremens?

Others said how fortunate for Marguerite Prescott that she had won the well-to-do bachelor, Albert Norton. Was he not a prominent grocer in the rising town of Pemberton; did he not have a nice new home in which to install his bride, and, if he would drink a little too much sometimes, what did that amount to? Could not the same be said of a host of men, and did not prosperity attend them? Besides, Albert Norton had reformed and become a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, and he was a good catch for any poor girl.

The wiser heads said he had not had time since his reformation to prove himself, and it was not safe for a bright young life to trust her destiny to a reformed drunkard.

Marguerite had heard both sides of the story. All the gossipers' gossip had been poured into her listening ears, but she heeded none of it. She had plighted her troth to Albert Norton, she loved him and she meant to marry him, let the people say what they would.

Her lines had not fallen in pleasant places. She was the eldest of a large family of children, and at an early age she had had to go out and battle with the world. Her father was an invalid and her mother very delicate, so on her weak shoulders devolved grave responsibilities. And when she came to Pemberton to fill a position she had procured, little did she dream of meeting her fate and of being an instrument in God's hands for good.

Though adverse circumstances had made her a bread-winner, she had not been shorn of her rightful heritage. Her graceful manners, her proud, elastic step, and her bright, piquant face all bespoke the in-born lady that she was. So when Albert Norton led her to the altar, and after their bridal tour, they were domiciled in their new home, the Silver Poplars, he felt that he was the most fortunate of men.

How time sped by on golden pinions, and how blissfully happy they were! How could the tempter find their Eden with love so pure, so holy as theirs to guide and to guard them. Now a bright little boy came, a tie to bind their hearts more closely together, and Marguerite felt doubly secure in her husband's love. Little Barry, the babe, would keep the tempter at bay, and never, never would he invade their sanctuary.

So many blessings came to fill her cup of happiness that the evil she had most dreaded became a thing of the past, a something she had put far away from her, a sorrow that could not be her portion now. How little

do we realize that often when the sunshine seems brightest shadows may soon fall deepest.

Little Barry was now a year old, and Marguerite had long anticipated a visit home to mother. So arrangements were perfected and Mr. Norton bade adieu to his loved ones as he saw them start on their journey. He did not realize the depth of his affection for his treasures until he returned to his now desolate home. The last days of a bright September were tinging the trees with scarlet and gold, and the last rays of the dying sunset burnished the windows, casting over all a brilliant glory. How lovely his home looked as he went up the broad walk; but no sweet faced woman stood at the door to give him welcome. When he entered no childish prattle, no patter of little feet greeted him. He put sad thoughts from him; all this was for Marguerite's happiness, and he must be brave and endure the loneliness for a while. She said she would write often, and those letters would cheer him during her long stay. She had promised to write almost every day, for little Barry had contracted a cold, and it was only with the permission of the family physician that he had been willing for the visit to be made at this time.

Alas for husband! Alas for wife! Alas that so much trouble has been caused by the mails and the males! The following evening was to bring a letter, how could he wait for morning to dawn? All night with loneliness of heart he had tossed on his pillow, and when he fell asleep it was to dream of Marguerite and Barry. Evening came at last and the mail, but it brought no letter to the disconsolate husband. Day after day passed until the long, lonely hours were unendurable, and still no letter came. Then the gossipers began their devastating

work, and it was borne to Albert Norton's ears until he became crazed and knew not himself.

Some said Marguerite would never return, for they had heard her say she only had married old Norton for his money, others said they had separated for he had become angry with her for beginning a course in music, and she had become incensed at him for refusing to buy her a piano. So on and on the gossip went until the whole town, and even the neighboring towns bemoaned the fate of the once happy pair. Desolate at home, desolate everywhere, for surcease of sorrow Albert Norton went back to the cup. And thus the tempter came.

Now when maddened by drink, when unable to appreciate news from the loved ones, letters began to come. Letters that had lain in the office, having been put in another's box, were now delivered to the rightful owner, but too late, the work was done. And poor little Marguerite grieved and wondered why no answer came to her letters. Was her husband ill, or what could be the matter? He, in his desperation, cursed his wife, cursed his child, and vowed that he would never take them back, would never look on their faces again.

While these things were assuming their worst form, Mr. Conner, Albert Norton's cousin, wired Marguerite to come home immediately. Still in ignorance of what awaited her, she answered the summons at once. On reaching Pemberton Marguerite went first to Mr. Conner's home. Pale with fear, she could scarcely command her voice to ask of Mrs. Conner, who met her at the gate, what was the great trouble.

"Marguerite," said Mrs. Conner, as she conducted her in and placed her arms lovingly around her, "you must be brave and try to bear what I have to tell you.

Cousin Albert has gone back to the wine cup, and has been raving like a madman for several days. He says he will never see you and Barry again; said you should never come back."

"Oh, Cousin Allie, did Mr. Norton say that?" and sobs shook the little frame as she gathered her child closer. "What has caused all this?" she asked through her tears.

"No letters came from you, Marguerite, and evil tongues set to work to poison his mind against you."

"And I wrote every day as I promised."

For a moment Marguerite sat in deep thought, then she said:

"Cousin Allie, I love Mr. Norton, he loves me, he loves Barry; I will not give him up, he shall not give me up. I will save him. Now I am going home; you go with me and we will make everything as cheerful and home-like as possible."

Mrs. Conner was not prepared for the great courage that shone out in Marguerite in this first fiery ordeal. Soon they were at Silver Poplars and all trace of the absentees was removed. Cheerful fires blazed on the hearths, and soon Marguerite was busy preparing supper, while Barry played on the carpet.

Mrs. Conner went home, but promised to return ere long. Soon after her arrival she heard the unsteady step and coarse laugh of the drunken husband. Going to the gate she said joyfully:

"Cousin Albert, I have good news for you. Marguerite and Barry have come. Don't you want to see them?"

"I do not," he said, "and I will never see them again."

"Why, Cousin Albert, you know you love little Barry, and Marguerite, too, and you will go with me to see them."

"Yes, I did love them, but a man can be driven to desperation until he does not know what love is. I tell you, and I mean what I say, I will never speak to them, nor will I ever look on their false cruel faces again."

"Come Cousin Albert, I am going home with you, and you will take back to your heart your wife and child, for Marguerite still loves you and is innocent of anything for which you may blame her."

"What, go home with me?" he said as he reeled by her side; "people will talk about it."

"I do not care what people say," she answered, "I am going home with you."

So onward they went, he reeling from side to side, persisting in his determination never to speak to his wife and child. When they reached the veranda Barry, hearing footsteps, sprang up from his play, and, with little arms outstretched, went crying:

"Papa! papa! !"

In a moment all the father love surged through the heart and brain of Mr. Norton, and opening his arms, little Barry was gathered to his bosom; but a light step was heard and Marguerite, brave little Marguerite stood by his side.

"Have you no welcome for me?" she asked, and throwing the other arm around her he drew her to him and kissed her as if he were loath to give her up.

Mrs. Conner stole softly out and home to tell Mr. Conner of their joyous re-union. Later on she went again to see how they were getting along. She found them sitting on the veranda in the twilight, Barry on

one knee and Marguerite on the other, and she knew from their low cooing, happy tones that Marguerite, Barry and the husband had anchored safe at home.

But what a life spread out for Marguerite. She saw it and chose the right path. She at once united with the church and became a worker in the Lord's vineyard. She became a teacher in the Sunday School, and is throwing in her mite in every way, hoping the Lord will give her the fondest of her wishes. Her husband accompanies her to church, and we pray with Marguerite that this reformation may be for all time; that he may look to his brave, true little wife and his innocent child, and for their sakes, never allow the tempter to gain an entrance into his life.

TO MY MOTHER IN HEAVEN.

Sweet mother, long has been the day
Since your dear presence cheered our home,
And I in love did look on you
With hope of many happy years
Of sweet companionship together.
Alas, for cherished hopes!

To-day
You sleep by father's side with those
Who long have slept at our old home,—
There where the blooming myrtle twines
Its tendrils round the cold grey stones;
And birds flit o'er the silent graves
And sing their songs of praise to God.
'Tis spring, and odors scent the air,
Glad notes from all the groves resound,
All nature's joyous. Only I,
My darling mother, I am sad,
I miss your words of love and cheer,
And lone I tread life's weary way.
I long the silent night throughout,
And all the dreary day for you!
But you are happy, mother dear,
With all the blest in that bright land
Where you have gone.

I wonder oft
How great the distance is to you,
And o'er and o'er again I ask
The selfsame question,—“Oh, how far?”
And then I wonder, too, how long
The time ere I to you shall go
And you will clasp me to your heart
And press upon my lips the kiss
Of sweet good-night. Your voice would be
To me the sweetest music ear
Has ever heard,—ah, passing sweet!
Oh, mother dear, you do not know
The anguish heart and brain of mine
Have undergone since that dark night
You went away, the bitter tears
Your child has wept, for life and hope
And joy went out when death his hand
Laid on the form I loved so well.

That yearning's ever at my heart;
When settles night o'er all the earth
I lay me down, then comes the thought,—
The stifling thought, “My mother's dead!”
When dawns the rosy morn, and gleams
Of gold athwart my casement stream,
The mournful wail escapes my lips,
The burning tears my pillow bathe,—
The thought o'erwhelms me,—“Mother's dead!”
And all the years to come I'll know
No mother's love!”

What faith was mine
When fervent prayers I sent to God
That he would spare my mother!

In grief I cried, "Thy will, O God,
Not mine be done." The Father smiled
And through the clouds held out his hand.
The way was dark—I see it now
But could not then—into the light
He would have led me had I known
His meaning! Foolish me, I thought
My will was His and He would grant
My prayer. I thought He meant once more
To give you back, my mother dear,
Whose life hung on a brittle thread
At His free will to give or take.
But He had come for you, my own,—
In love His hand to me He gave
To lead me through the mist of tears.
The angel came, you said, "Good-bye,"
And went with him to heaven and God;
While I, heart-broken, knelt me down;
I could not pray, my faith was gone.
The faith on which I'd built
My highest hopes of heaven's bliss
Lay now in ruins at my feet.
I lost God's hand, I lost my faith,
I lost my darling mother. All—
All was gone! And my dead self
Alone remained. Dead to hope,
Ambition,—everything save one
Corroding thought, "Mother's dead."

The days passed on, grew into weeks,
E'en months went by, I scarce know how,
So blind with tears my eyes have been.
The old clock chimes the hours away,

The seasons come and go the same,
The flowers bloom, the birds sing on,
And still your child mourns all the while.
That pain tugs at my heart to-night
And whispers "Mother's still away."

* * * * *

Hope's come at last, I'm not alone,
For faith, sweet faith, lights up my path,
My mother's home's not far away.
"I view the span of life" and catch
A glimpse of happiness beyond.
And though 'tis past the power of words
To paint, or tongue to tell how much
I want you, mother, God's grace
Shall bear me up. Up there we'll meet,
And death no more shall part us.

LOVE AT HAZEL BROOK.

The last beams of the rosy west burnished the windows of Hazel Brook like shining gold. "How beautiful!" exclaimed a young girl who sat in a grapevine swing that hung in a grove of maples across the road opposite the house.

It was a balmy evening in early summer, and robed in white with the breezes playing among her golden curls, she little dreamed of the artistic picture she was making until she heard the echo of her own words, "How beautiful," and B. Livingston stood by her side.

"Oh! B., how you frightened me," she said, and the little hands went up to screen her eyes, as she paused in her slow swinging.

"Did I frighten you very much, little sweet-heart?" he asked eagerly. "Why, how nervous you must be!"

"Yes, I am nervous, for my father has been so angry with me, B., and he never gave me a cross word before."

"It is all because I love you," said B.

"Yes, that is one reason; the other is because I refuse to marry Lynn Merton. My father has told me never to speak to you again, and oh! it is so hard when I love you so, and when I have never disobeyed him."

"What are his objections to me, Gertie?"

"He says that you are a fortune hunter."

The man's lips curled in scorn.

"A fortune hunter, indeed," he said. "It is my poverty then that is the barrier, and yet, Gertie, so great is my love I would ask you to share even grim poverty with me."

"And most willingly would I share beggary with you, but my father's will I cannot go against, B.," she exclaimed excitedly. "You must leave me now, I hear my father's voice, and if he should find you here I shudder to think what might be the result."

"I do not fear him, sweet girl," answered B., "but for your sake I will go. This is not our last meeting, however. When shall I see you again?"

"Oh, I do not know," she answered, "only go now for he will surely come."

B. Livingston bade her a hasty adieu and strode across the fields toward home.

Hazel Brook was a cozy little cottage on the borders of a beautiful woodland that extended across the road in a northerly direction. Southward spread out the broad acres of the proud owner of this rural home. Through its fields and fallows meandered a babbling stream called Hazel Brook from which the homestead took its name. Gasper Hastings was the owner of some of the richest lands in Western Kentucky. Only one child graced their downy nest, and for her Mr. and Mrs. Hastings had the brightest hopes. Gentle, blue-eyed Gertie Hastings. Truly.

"None knew her but to love her. None named her but to praise." Bright, beautiful and accomplished, the idle of doting parents, nothing but happiness should have beamed in the future for one so deserving. But she was peculiarly constituted; frail as some rare exotic, the

slightest breath of reproof would crush her like a flower blighted by the early frost of autumn. Yet her loving father did not understand the frailty of the fair being who revered, loved and trusted him, believing his will was law. Nor had she ever had occasion to oppose that iron will until B. Livingston became one of her many admirers.

B. was a worthy young man of good family, but unfortunately for his future prospects, his father boasted not of the wealth that made Gasper Hastings imperiously proud; and for this reason alone B. Livingston was not a welcome visitor at Hazel Brook.

B. and Gertie had met at a social gathering in the neighborhood and it was a case of love at first sight, but they little dreamed toward what that love would tend.

Among Gertie Hastings' most ardent admirers, and the one most favored by her father was Lynn Merton, a rich young farmer whose lands adjoined the Hastings estate. Often had Gasper Hastings looked on these wide spreading acres with swelling emotions akin to pride as he thought of his lovely daughter being mistress of Lynn Merton's home.

But Lynn Merton was not the idol that Gertie had reared up in her heart. There was a coarseness in his very being that spoke only too plainly of how his whole nature went out grasping for the sordid things of earth. Very unlike was he to the handsome, refined B., who was as gentle as a woman and knew the delicate, sensitive nature of Gertie.

For awhile the lovers were allowed to drift peacefully onward toward that mystical isle where all is enchantment and every dream is an elysian of happiness.

But they suddenly awakened to the true state of

affairs, or perhaps B's rival, with his evil insinuations, began to poison the father's mind; at any rate barriers rose up, clouds overshadowed their calm sea, and Gertie realized that her father's will was as unchangeable as the law of the Medes and Persians.

Gertie Hastings watched the receding form of B. Livingston as ever and anon he looked back to catch a glimpse of one he loved so well. Now he was lost to view and she wended her way across the dusty road to the house. At the gate her father awaited her with a sterner countenance than she had ever seen him wear before.

"Gertie, is that B. Livingston going across the meadows?" he asked angrily.

"Yes sir," she answered nervously.

"And you have met him clandestinely after I had forbidden you speaking to him?"

"I did not know he was coming this evening," she answered through her tears.

"Girl, will you never learn that I am not to be trifled with? Whether you did or did not know, understand me this once for all time. If I ever catch B. Livingston speaking to you, or ever catch him on my grounds I will shoot him as he falls dead at your feet."

"Oh! Father!" pityingly cried the girl.

"None of your nonsense, girl; I have determined that you shall marry Lynn Merton, and you will find ere long that I am not to be swerved from my purpose."

"Marry Lynn Merton, father, I would die first." And in the girl's eyes was a look of determination not unlike her father's, as trembling in every limb she fled to her mother's side and buried her face in her lap. She did not know her father in this new phase of character,

and in her fear she shrank from him as she had never been wont to do.

Mrs. Hastings could only stroke her child's hair, lovingly, tenderly, showing by this act that her heart was with her even if no comforting words escaped her lips. The mother had seen her husband's fierce nature aroused before, and she knew her influence at this stage could have no effect.

If Mr. Hastings missed the merry voice that hitherto made music at Hazel Brook, no one knew it, and if Gertie's good-night kiss no longer lingered on his lips and her soft arms no more stole caressingly around his neck none were any wiser; and if the little pale face and listless step awakened a feeling of regret he kept it to himself.

Weeks rolled by and not once had the lovers met, but fate decreed this estrangement should come to an end and they met by chance at the home of a mutual friend.

"Oh, Gertie, this life is intolerable," said B., clasping Gertie's hand warmly in his own broad palms. Either you must fly with me or I must go away forever. I cannot live day by day with you so near and yet so far. Why will you not defy your father's power and become my wife at once?"

"Do not ask me, dear B.," she sadly answered, "already my cross is too heavy to be borne. Do not urge me; you know my first duty is to my parents."

"But the Bible says, 'Leave father and mother.'"

"Yes, and it also says, 'Children obey your parents,' and if I refuse to marry Lynn Merton, and go with you against my father's will my sin would be double."

"My poor little tired darling, if only I could per-

suade you to see as I do," said B., drawing her to his side.

"That you will never do, for much as I love you I cannot go against my father's will. Besides, I will not be here long. Do you not see how pale I am growing?"

"Oh! life is so hard!" he said, as he brushed away his tears; "but let us look on the bright side, there may yet be a rift in the clouds."

"I haven't much hope of my father's relenting," she answered sadly, "but we can only trust and pray."

"I have determined to brave his displeasure this evening, and with your consent will escort you home."

"Oh! B., I have such grave fears as to what the consequences might be."

"I will brave everything if you will allow me to accompany you."

Gertie reluctantly consented and soon they were driving leisurely towards her home. But suddenly a horseman came dashing towards them.

"My father!" whispered Gertie, and Mr. Hastings rode up, grasping the reins in one hand, while in the other he held a revolver which he pointed at the breast of B. Livingston.

"Oh! Father! Father!" screamed Gertie, while B. looked the man unflinchingly in the eye.

For a moment Hastings quailed under B's gaze, his horse gave a sudden plunge, almost prostrating his rider and the weapon fell harmlessly to the ground.

B's horse started off at a rapid pace, and soon B. had the pleasure of depositing Gertie in safety at her own gate.

Presently Mr. Hastings rode up livid with rage.

"B. Livingston," he said, in tones husky with anger, "this is the last chance I shall give you. Address another word to my daughter and it will be at your peril."

"I love your daughter, Mr. Hastings, and I have honorable intentions. Be assured that I shall speak to and endeavor to see her at every opportunity. I do not fear you nor Lynn Merton either," and with that he drove off, leaving Hastings clinching his hands and stamping furiously.

"I will outwit him yet," he muttered, "and Gertie shall become Lynn Merton's wife to-morrow, or B. Livingston shall die."

But on the morrow Gertie was unable to leave her room, and a few days after B. Livingston left for a distant city; anything was preferable to bringing sorrow on the one woman he loved. If he lived near her he must see her and in this event it was death, perhaps to both. He could not say good-bye, only in the loving message he sent her.

After weeks of illness Gertie arose, a mere shadow, a complete wreck of her former self. B. had not returned, on the contrary he had secured a good position and was doing well. Yet the memory of this first and only love was ever present with him. Gertie often spent her evenings at the grapevine swing, weeping over their separation and her father's cruelty. Day by day she faded. Then there came a time when she could no longer leave her room.

After months of pleading with her father he finally consented that B. should come to see her.

B. Livingston was at home, spending the holidays when a little note was handed to him. He read it

with a strange mixture of pleasure and pain. It ran thus:

"Dear B.,

"After months of vain pleadings to once more see your face ere my eyes are forever sealed by the icy fetters of death, my father has at last consented for you to come. Do not delay, he may revoke his promise, and then you may never see me on earth again. But up there—up there B.—they say partings do not come.

"Will you come to your dying

"GERTIE."

Soon after the perusal of this note B. was on his way to the bedside of sweet Gertie Hastings. As he drew near Hazel Brook the gloomy surroundings had for him sad forebodings. Had death preceded him, and was he too late? The wintry winds sighed mournfully through the woodland. The grapevine swing, where in their early love they had spent so many happy hours, swayed to and fro, and there was a chill of sadness hovering over all.

He was met at the door by Mrs. Hastings, whose tear-stained face whispered his worst fears. She pressed his hand in silence and led him to Gertie's room. May Herndon, Gertie's cousin, sat by her bedside. She arose, bowed in recognition to B., and pointed to the seat she had vacated. Gertie's eyes were closed, and with breaking heart, B. saw only too plainly the great change that had been wrought since last they met.

He went around to her side; she opened her eyes with the glad cry, "Oh! B., have you come at last!" She raised her arms and they fell around his neck. "At last," she whispered, "at last!" as she nestled in his arms.

Convulsive sobs shook the strong man's frame as he held her close and tried to suppress his emotions.

"Lay me back on the pillows now B.," she faintly whispered, "and sit close beside me for I am drifting away from you. Don't cry," she would whisper softly, as with her little thin hands she stroked his bearded face. "Don't cry B., perhaps it will not be long before you join me in that beautiful land. I shall watch and wait for your coming, and if it be very, very long ere you come do not forget me, for I shall be ever near you. Think of me often and believe that as your guardian angel I am watching over you. Perhaps a time may come when you will feel my presence. Have you been true to me all this long time, B.? Sometimes when cousin May would write so much of you in the great city a little sadness would creep into my heart and I would think B. does not love poor Gertie any more."

"Oh! Gertie, how could you doubt me?" B. questioned. "Never for one moment has your image left my heart. Now promise me that you will try to get well for my sake, won't you?"

"No, B., there is no hope. I am dying now. See, my hands are icy. But I do not fear, in Heaven I shall find sweet rest, and God is calling me home. I think how desolate you will be for a long time. It may be years that I will have to wait for your coming. I have thought that if you and Cousin May could love each other, that would brighten your life when I am gone."

"Gertie, I cannot give you up," said the tremulous voice of B.

"You must not talk that way. Be brave and try to be resigned, believing that it is all for the best. Remember that 'the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away' Tell mother, father and May to come. I feel so strangely. It must be death."

The parents and May entered at B.'s bidding, and stood around the couch of the dying girl.

"Darling mother, you have been so kind, so good and always so true to your little Gertie. Father, you have killed your child; you parted B. and me on earth, but you cannot part us above, we will be re-united there. May God forgive you, father, as I forgive the great wrong you have done us."

Grim and immovable sat Mr. Hastings. Mrs. Hastings held Gertie's hand, weeping bitterly.

"Bury me in the orchard, mother, near the dear old grapevine swing where B. can often visit my grave. At my funeral sing my favorite song, 'There is Rest at Home.' I am going now. Kiss me good-bye, father, it has been so long since I felt your kisses rest upon my lips. Heaven bless you," she said, as he bent over and kissed her. "Now May, while I clasp your hand in B.'s I give you to him. Now mother, and last let B.'s kisses rest upon my lips," she whispered in faltering tones. B.'s kiss was indeed the last. There was a convulsive shudder—and Gertie Hastings' spirit went to God.

On the following day B. was called back to the city, and could not attend Gertie's burial. Beautiful in death, Gertie lay in the wreath-entwined casket, and as B. gazed on her for the last time he felt that she was too pure for earth and had been transplanted to fairer climes.

It seems that Mr. Hasting's hatred for B. Livingston had not abated. With dead Gertie in the house and her request fresh in his memory, he would not even allow her to sleep where B. could often visit her grave. So he determined to have her remains interred in the cemetery at Casey, where the waters of the broad Ohio could sing

a requiem over her grave. The day of the burial was dark and gloomy, rain drops kissed the earth softly, tenderly as if all nature were weeping in monotones for lost Gertie.

The waters of the Ohio were far over the banks—so far that no travelling was done from Hazel Brook to Casey save by small boats. The girl's remains were placed in a boat with a neighbor and Lynn Merton at the helm. Mr. Hastings sat near the coffin. Slowly they went down Hazel Brook.

“The dead steered by the dumb.”

With weeping eyes the mother and cousin watched the little craft out of sight.

After Gertie's burial Mr. Hastings became a changed man. Remorse seemed to take possession of him, and listlessly, aimlessly, he wandered around until disease seized upon him.

Lynn Merton became dissipated and gambled with a high hand until all his wealth was swept away. A ruined man, he left the state, it is hoped to retrieve his fortune in an honest way.

Mr. Hastings lingered several months, and during this time he had repented deeply of his great sin. He sent for B. and entreated his forgiveness. In his last hours he wanted B. always near him. When he was laid away to rest and his will was read it was found that all his estate was left to B. Livingston, except the ample provision he had made for his wife.

Many years had come and gone. A beautiful residence has taken the place of the cottage at Hazel Brook. It is the home of B. and May, for May is now B.'s wife. Mrs. Hastings, a sad, sweet-faced woman, lives with them. Across the road, in the orchard, where the grape-

vine swing used to hang, gleam in the morning sun two beautiful monuments. One is sacred to the memory of Gertie Hastings, for her remains have been removed, and the other is to Jasper Hastings. Side by side the father and the daughter sleep.

Two beautiful children make merry now at Hazel Brook. The eldest, a boy, they call Gasper, while the other is a girl, called Gertie Hastings Livingston.

AWAKENED.

M. T. TO C. W.

Take back the pledge of friendship
That once you gave to me,
And in the past forever
Our broken ties will be.
'Twas but a passing fancy,
A blissful summer's dream,
That flashed upon our pathway,
Like a meteoric gleam.
Every token of remembrance
Is yours, not mine, to keep,
And with the happy by-gones
Let our fitful idyl sleep.
'Twas but a heart's devotion
You won and cast away,—
A chapter in life's lesson
We're learning every day.
I say good-bye with sadness—
A sadness full of tears—
For, light as you may deem it,
It has burdened me with years.
I grieve not for your friendship,
Though it was passing sweet,—
I sigh because my trust in you,
Lies withered at my feet.

THE OLD STONE STEPS.

In my fancy I sit on the old stone steps,
Where so often in childhood I rested from play,
'Neath the broad-spreading boughs of the tall locust tree
That once cast its white blossoms just over my way;
I built castles of gold, with their glittering spires,
On the moss-covered banks of life's mystical stream,
And my bark sailed far out o'er the waters so bright,
To the land of sweet hope, in my fair childish dream.

In my girlhood I sit on the old stone steps
With my visions more real than childhood's bright gleam,
But the glamor and glow of morning's first dawn
Still are hovering in beauty o'er life's silver stream.
I weave meshes of gold in love's gossamer web
As I toy with the bubbles that arise to my view,
As I glide o'er the mythical, mystical stream
Into Cupid's bright realms with their rose-tinted hue.

I now sit, once again, on the old stone steps,
For my journey's been long and I droop on the way.
And the glint and the gold of my maidenhood's morn—
They have long ago changed into twilight so grey,
And the fondly loved locust has withered and died,
And no snowy white petals from blossoms so sweet,
Are now drifting adown like a shower of pearls,
Till in fragrance they drop at my faltering feet.

I am sitting to-day on the old stone steps,
The old home is deserted and lonely and still,
No sweet innocent voices of children at play,
Break the gloom now so dismal and silent and chill;
All the loved ones have passed o'er the old stone steps,
O'er the steps that are moss-grown and greyish and cold,
They have led the way upward o'er the stairway of gold,
And have entered in safety the Good Shepherd's fold.

MAY VERNON'S TRIALS.

OR, THE MEETING AT CLAYTON AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

(Founded on Facts.)

CHAPTER I.

THE MARRIAGE.

“Oh, hard when love and duty clash!”

The twilight shadows were deepening throughout the little village of Clayton. The evening sky was rosy with the last beams of the declining day, for already the great orb had disappeared behind the western hills. The stars were coming out one by one in the blue vault above, and the silvery crescent of the new moon peeped through the boughs of a spreading oak on two lovers, who perhaps, charmed by the beauty of the evening, still lingered beside a rustic gate.

May Vernon, with one hand thrown carelessly over the quaint carvings of the gate, the other clasped in the broad palm of Carl Marsden, lent a listening ear to the old, old story.

“Ah! May, my beauty, if only I could prove to you how undying is my affection,” he said as he bent low over the sweet face—“if only I could snatch that bright star from its home, and place it as a diadem on your brow, or, of yon silvery crescent make a fairy bark, and with you beside me, as my sceptered queen, sail on through life forever!”

"You forget, Carl, that the moon and stars are worlds, and between the two we might be crushed to atoms. But away with all this fine talk; I am only plain little May Vernon, and care nothing for all this splendor by which you would surround me. Only be true to me," she softly whispered, "for oh, I am bartering mother, home and love all for you. Think too, what I am promising when I never deceived my mother in all my life; and oh, I grow so sad when I think of that excursion to E—— and of what her awakening will be when she realizes that I am gone forever from her sheltering care—from the parental roof. If only,"—and May hesitated.

"If only I were your mother's choice," he added. "You could not find voice to tell me that; but I am fully cognizant of the fact that she does not like me."

"You have guessed well. That is just what I hesitated in telling you, for I know everything would be so different if only you were her choice."

"Now don't worry your head about that, my little sweetheart; when once we are married the time will soon come when your mother will welcome us home and give us the kiss of forgiveness."

"I hope so, but you don't know my mother; she is very strong in her prejudices, and does not soon forgive a wrong. This is why it almost breaks my heart to leave her, for already her cup has been filled to the brim with sorrow, and my going away may mean years of separation."

"Let us not brood over imaginary sorrow—time enough for that when it comes, so let us be happy while we may. Cheer up, and tell me that you will look at

the new moon and dream of me. Let me see,—how do those lines run? Oh, yes; I remember:—

“New moon, true moon, fair and free,
Tell me to-night who my lover's to be.”

“Ah! it is looking at us through the leaves,” said May, “and woe be unto those who do not see the new moon clear.”

“Surely you are not growing superstitious, May?” and he laughed a little uneasily.

“I do not know, but ever since this excursion to E——has been planned, I have had gloomy forebodings. I have been taught to hate deceit, treachery, and everything akin to them; and to think we are planning to deceive my very best of friends seems more than I can bear. Perhaps by waiting we might gain her consent.”

“But I cannot wait any longer; you have put me off from time to time, and I tell you, once for all, the decision must be made between your mother and me. If you refuse to wed me in E——we part forever. Now, which shall it be?”

“Oh, Carl, why make it so hard for me?”

“Think it over, and make up your mind; we only have a few more days, I will see you again soon. Now, good-bye; I promised to see a friend to-night and I will be an hour late;” and he left a burning kiss on the rosebud mouth.

She watched his receding form and heard him whistling:

“I love her, I always loved my Kate,
I love her more than ever now,
Since I kissed her at the gate.”

May staid to hear no more, but ran lightly up the

broad walk leading to the house, feeling assured that her lover's thoughts were all of her.

The morning of the excursion to E——dawned bright and beautiful—a June morning full of gladness and song. The lovers had met in the meanwhile, May had made her decision, and Carl had come off conqueror. With an aching heart May bade her mother adieu; and as Mrs. Vernon clasped her darling girl to her heart, hoping for a safe and speedy return, little did she dream of the months of anguish that must go by ere she was again permitted to fold her beloved child to her bosom.

With the return of the excursionists Mrs. Vernon watched for May's coming, but, alas! she was doomed to disappointment, for instead there came only the mournful tidings of her daughter's marriage to Carl Marsden.

Oh! can death bring more sadness to a mother's heart than a marriage?—and a marriage against her will, against the dictates of her better judgment? There are the long weary days of watching and waiting for the footstep that never comes, listening for the voice so loved, for the merry ripple of laughter that was as fresh and pure as an outburst of melody from a bird in its first song. The voice is now for another, the smiles and kisses are for bearded lips, and day after day the patient mother must bear this pain tugging at her heartstrings and become resigned to a second place in her darling's affections.

May had a few thousand dollars in the bank, bequeathed her by an uncle. She came in possession of this soon after her marriage, and months of happiness glided by for her. Long, loving letters found their way to Mrs. Vernon, but she had never become sufficiently rec-

onciled to Carl Marsden to call them back home, which had she done, all the sorrow that followed might have been averted. Perhaps if parents were more forgiving in such cases, and young couples placed at once on the upward path, careers of usefulness might often result from the parental blessing, instead of failures that seem to follow their frowns.

CHAPTER II.

THE AWAKENING.

May, so absorbed in her new-found happiness, thought of nothing but the present. So loyal was she to her hero, that, if after several months he was not as attentive towards her, nor as affectionate, as in the early days of their marriage, she made excuses for him. If he began to keep late hours, and came home with his face flushed, and his breath tainted with the odor which betrayed his familiarity with the wine-cup, the brave wife waited for his return, still pleading for his short-comings. Truly, though—

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart.
’Tis woman’s whole existence.”

Very happy had May been in her new home, and now her cup was overflowing. Over a year had gone by, and by her side was a beautiful babe she called “Cleave.” If only Carl would allow her to go home now, she felt that little Cleave would bridge the gulf that had separated them. If only she could lay him in her mother’s arms, she felt all would be right. But Carl had never forgiven Mrs. Vernon’s great dislike for himself, and would not be persuaded.

But, alas! May's sorrows came not singly. There came a time when the little home had to be given up, when they had to move into poorer quarters, when Carl was gone sometimes for days, leaving May and little Cleave all alone, when he would come home with an unsteady step, when the wolf seemed, indeed, prowling at the door, when rumors reached May of her husband's devotion to another.

Did she realize then that her idol had fallen? Still forgiving she would have taken him to her heart again, asking,—

“Oh? what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through sorrow — through glory and
shame?”

But there dawned a day at last when she fully realized what this devotion to another meant. She sat, as of old, watching for his return, hoping, and trying to pray that she could win him back. She resolved at any rate, to try. At last, at last, she heard him coming; she opened the door to greet him, as she was wont to do in brighter days. But he pushed her aside.

“Oh! Carl, I am so glad you have come,” she exclaimed, taking no notice of his rudeness. “We have been so lonely; look at little Cleave, even he is glad. Won't you stay with us now? I fear our little boy will not even know his papa if you do not stay with us more than you have of late. You will remain with us to-night, won't you?”

“I have other engagements,” he answered gruffly.

“But, Carl, for my sake, for your child's sake, be your old self again; and let us go back to the dear old happy days and start anew. Give up this worthless life you are living—a life that is degrading us all day by day.

Think of your child,—of your wife—how she gave up all for you, and how she would even now, forget her wrongs and take you to her heart again.”

“Your wrongs, indeed! What do you mean, madam?” he brutishly asked.

“Oh! Carl, I know how your name is coupled with that of another. I know all, and yet, I blush to mention it, for I have trusted you so fully.”

“Who has dared to meddle with my affairs?” he asked.

“No one but a friend who would save you. Now, will you not come back to me, Carl? Remember I am your wife; will you not give up this unholy love?” and her voice was very pleading.

“Unholy love?” he repeated, sneeringly, and an angry flush shot into either cheek.

“Woman, you do not know what you say,” and he rudely pushed off the little hand that lay caressingly on his arm, and brought his own hands down heavily on her shoulders, while he looked her steadily in the eye and hissed through set teeth: “You do not know that *yours* is an unholy love, that you are but on a common level with the woman you talk about, and no more my wife than she. You do not know, that, in order to possess myself of your little fortune, I bribed an individual to put on clerical robes and pronounce us man and wife. Now, that your money is all gone, and the bloom and blush of your maidenhood departed, you cease to charm me. I have no further use for you. You are the dupe of an adventurer who now seeks other fields to conquer.”

“Oh! Carl,” and she fell on her knees, “I implore you to take back those cruel words, say that what you

have told me is false, and I am your lawfully wedded wife."

"You are not my wife, and I will swear it," he hissed in reply. "You and your child have no right to my name. You may go back now to the mother you so fondly love, and to Clayton, where your friends will no doubt give you a hearty welcome, especially when they know that you are not a wife. I go now from your presence forever," and he strode out of the room, closing the door on the grief-stricken woman.

"Not a wife! God in heaven, have mercy," pleaded May, sinking lower on the floor and burying her face in her hands. "Not a wife, and little Cleave no right to a father's name!" she moaned in her anguish. Where could she go? What could she do? Even the very walls seemed to echo, "You are not a wife." All night she kept a lonely vigil, sometimes pacing the floor, and again, crouching in the shadows, as if to hide her shame.

The fire burned low on the hearth, and ghastly pictures flitted over the grim walls. Slowly the gray morning began to dawn over the great city, and found in the humble apartment of the Marsden's only a sad woman, hugging to her bosom a tiny snow drop, and moaning as she swayed to and fro: "Not a wife, little Cleave, no name."

All alone in the great city, with scarcely a crust of bread, and this great sorrow gnawing at her heart.

Ere a week had gone by the news of May's desertion had reached the gossip lovers of Clayton, but none had the courage to break the news to Mrs. Vernon.

A commercial traveler, an old time friend, had met Carl Marsden on a south-bound train and Marsden had related to him the whole story in a cool, reckless manner.

"It was all I could do to keep my pistol from his head," said the salesman, in relating the incident to a merchant in Clayton. "To think that poor little woman is now left alone in the city, worse, far worse than a deserted wife, with no shelter, perhaps, for her defenseless head."

"Yes," answered the merchant, "but it ought to be a lesson to girls, not to trust every fellow that has a handsome face."

"Forewarned is forearmed," so May's former associates were prepared for her coming. "She need not think she will get back into our circle," said one.

"I for one will give her the cold shoulder," said another.

"I shall not countenance her," chimed in a third.

"Just as I expected," said several.

"I blame her mother," said others, "she ought to have had her under better control,"—and so the gossip continued.

Who but a mother will follow us through glory and shame, who but a mother will listen to all our grievances, and kiss away our tears? Who but a mother is ever ready to overlook our faults, and take us to her heart again?

So May resolved to go back to home and mother. In a few days she had disposed of her few articles of furniture, paid her rent and had enough left to purchase a ticket to P—, a station eight miles from Clayton.

It was growing late in the afternoon of a December day when May, with little Cleave in her arms, alighted from the train. She started at once on her weary journey, for the clouds looked bleak, and already the winds sighed mournfully through the forest. Eight miles to

Clayton; how could she ever walk that far? Drawing her shawl closer she dragged herself wearily along. She had not eaten, nor scarcely slept since the time of her desertion, and faint and weak she pressed on toward mother and home. But a kind old farmer came along and offered her a seat in his wagon. Five miles were passed over, and his road then ran in a different direction. Three miles farther and night was almost upon her.

On and on she went, resting here and there, until the lights of her home village gleamed in the distance. How her head ached and how heavy little Cleave was growing! Would she ever reach there!

* * * * *

Mrs. Vernon sat by the fireside thinking of May. So many months had gone by since any tidings had come from the absent one. Would she ever sit by her side as in olden time?

There is a faint rap at the door. Who can it be at this hour? Mrs. Vernon goes to the door and turns the lock. Slowly the door swings back on its hinges. The light in the grate flashes up for a moment and reveals May, with little Cleave clasped in her arms, lying across the threshold.

CHAPTER III.

HOME AND MOTHER.

The sun, like a great ball of fire, swung lower and lower, shedding his last beams on the straggling little village of Clayton. On the outskirts of this village stood a rude, low-roofed building whose windows were

now burnished like shining gold. The last rays of the dying day lent this charm to the dreary place, and the golden glory seemed to linger caressingly, as it fell on the face of a wan, pale woman, who sat by the window gazing abstractedly into the dim distance; and across the brow of a fair-faced child sleeping in a cradle by her side. The woman's face, on which traces of beauty were once visible, but now so full of sadness, sank lower until it rested on her hand, and in bitterness she whispered:

“Betrayed! betrayed by the man I loved! O! God, why didst thou not take us unto thyself; but no, no,—oh, why do I ask when I am not worthy to enter thy sacred precincts? I am an outcast on earth, and an alien from thee,—a mother and not a wife. My honor, my good name, all gone, and not even the inheritance of a father's name for my little Cleave. My life is indeed dark and dreary for one so young. Only eighteen summers have left their traces on my brow, and all is darkness, midnight blackness to me. Not the faintest ray of happiness lights my thorny path. If I only had the Christian's hope, but alas! even that is denied me, and, branded like the woman with the scarlet letter, I must bear my desertion, my sin, and my shame, in silence and alone. Not one to look in compassion on me, save my widowed mother, whose heart I have well-nigh broken. That I, her youngest, her pride, should have fallen so low! Great heavens, that I, who once held my place in the best circles of society, should have become so degraded! And Cleave, little Cleave, I have brought this woe upon you, too. But, oh! I did it innocently, I thought I was his wife.” And, sinking on the floor beside the sleeping babe she buried her face, while moans of anguish swayed her slender form.

"Come, my child, you must not give up to your grief this way," said an elderly lady who came to her side and laid her hand tenderly on the bowed head. "Can you not look to Jesus and cast your cares on Him," she continued, "He bids us come and says He will in no wise cast us out. Live for your boy's sake and rear him up for God."

"Don't, don't, mother, it hurts me so to know that I have brought all this on his little innocent head, and on you whose cup was already filled with anguish and tears. I cannot look to heaven for relief, I am not even worthy of that," and lower she sank on the floor while her mother knelt by the cradle and took May's slight form in her arms. It was a picture that angels might have wept over,—sorrow, old age, womanhood, and childhood, sat hand in hand in the glittering twilight; while the uncertain fire-light brightened up the room and then left it in shadows.

With May's coming came reverses to Mrs. Vernon, and she was forced to give up the home bound by so many sacred ties and rent a dreary old house in the suburbs of Clayton. Mrs. Vernon's life had been darkly clouded. Husband and son slept in untimely graves, but, left with a family of small children, she had trusted in Him who has said He will not forget the widow and the orphan; and she had seen her children grow up honorable and prosperous. May, the youngest and only girl at home, was just ripening into womanhood and beauty when Carl Marsden came—a dashing young man, and a stranger, whom Mrs. Vernon disliked from the first. But May's beautiful face had won him, and his gay, reckless manner had for her a peculiar charm. So May plighted her troth, hoping to gain her mother's

consent; but from time to time she was forced to postpone their marriage, until Carl would be put off no longer, as the reader already knows, so the excursion to E——resulted not only in the consummation of their plans, but in blighting her life, also. O! how much pain would be spared the erring if only the world would believe them less vile than they are represented; but, indeed, there are those who would rather believe all the evil of a person and none of the good, and it seems that the greater portion of Clayton was all this class.

Time wore on drearily to the deserted woman. Cursed by a brother, who had become hard-hearted and cruel, scorned by a sister she had fondly loved, sneered at by those who had been her associates, it is no wonder that she prayed for death as a release for herself and her child; but death does not come when we most want it, and, though life may become a burden, still it must be borne.

So May Vernon hopelessly and aimlessly took up the broken threads of her existence, and among her few friends and advisers sought a livelihood. Little Cleave grew brighter and more beautiful each day, and Mrs. Vernon's heart went out in fondest devotion to the little outcast. He was now almost a year old and seemed the only ray of sunshine in the gloomy old house. But there came a day when disease preyed upon the fragile form, and anxiously the two watched by the bedside of their darling. Their watching was all in vain, and sadly the physician shook his head when May begged for hope. Paler and thinner grew little Cleave, and ere long death's icy fetters were laid upon him, and with a sad, sweet smile on those who had loved him so much he closed his eyes on all things earthly, and his sweet spirit went to

that Father who has said "Suffer little children to come unto me." Sadly they followed him to his last resting place. As May gazed on the little bud so rudely broken, she felt what she was losing, and she sank by the lifeless form while the agonizing cry, "O, Cleave! Cleave! how can I give you up? How can I go to the old home without you;" broke on the stillness of the autumn evening. But hearts may break and still beat on, so May's heart so crushed and sad was now broken and bleeding and she felt that with Cleave's dying died out all the light of her life. Long dreary days went by with a mother's longing for the merry prattle and voice of a loved one that was forever stilled, until the days had grown into weeks since little Cleave had left them.

"The heart—which may be broken: happy they
Thrice fortunate! who, of that fragile mould,
The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year linked with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told;
While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die."

CHAPTER IV.

ADVISED.

About this time came Brother Holton, pastor of the Clayton Baptist Church, to hold a series of meetings. Broken in spirit, humiliated to the last degree, and groping in darkness, May could but list to that small voice that said "Come unto me." Seeking that panacea for all ills, accompanied by her mother, she ventured one night to church. Many months had gone by since she had entered the house of God, and since she had met the

friends of other days. A smile of scorn went round when the black robed figures entered, but the sad, hopeless expression that sat on the face of the younger awakened an interest in the heart of Brother Holton. The meeting continued, and sinners were fleeing to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." Brother Holton heard May's history, sought her out and entreated her to seek religion. Sadly she shook her head, and tears coursed their way down her cheeks.

"I know not the way," she answered, "I am groping in darkness. Pray for me, but do not ask me to the altar of prayer."

Mrs. Houston, a very zealous member, admonished her to become a Christian.

"Pray for me; I want the prayers of all Christians, but I cannot go to the anxious seat," was ever her answer.

Mrs. Danton, May's former teacher, sat near her one night during the meeting, when more than ever Brother Holton's words struck home to every heart. Sinners were calling for mercy, and Christians were at work in the good cause. Yet some who were suppressing the voice of conscience, sat back, cold and immovable. After earnest pleadings the pastor said to the congregation:

"If you have a friend here who is out of the ark of safety, go to that friend and give him your hand, and show by that act that you are interested in the salvation of his soul."

How Mrs. Danton longed to go to May, but she did not, and the opportunity passed.

Poor May, being the only one in the house who had not received this kindly attention, sat friendless and alone.

"Sad, indeed, is the fate of that one," said the pastor, "who has no friend with whom to journey to the Better Land; no friend on earth and none in eternity. What a future looms up before such a person! Oh! if there were ever a time when Christians should send up earnest petitions to the Great White Throne, it is now." Like one condemned to die sat May, and after services were over, Mrs. Danton, with a trembling voice, thus addressed her:

"May, I am your friend, and am interested in you; I want you to become a Christian. Will you not promise me that you will seek religion?"

"Yes, ma'am," she faintly whispered.

"And will you not promise me that you will go to the altar of prayer when the invitation is extended tomorrow night?" urged Mrs. Danton.

"Yes, ma'am," she answered, without hesitation.

"That is a good girl, May; remember you have one friend who is praying for you, and don't forget your promise," said Mrs. Danton as she turned to go.

On the day following, Mrs. Danton sent for May. She came bearing that same weary, hopeless expression on her countenance. It was the first time she had entered the house of Mrs. Danton since the happy old days when a light-hearted, innocent girl she came with her school-mates and mingled her beautiful voice with theirs in song. Old memories were awakened in the heart of each. But Mrs. Danton forced back her tears and warmly greeted her old pupil.

"May, I have sent for you," she began, "to talk with you on the subject of religion. What a great comfort it would be to you in this hour of trial. There is nothing that will bring such sweet peace to your heart

as this. Our dear Savior was himself a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief; and he has said 'Come unto me and I will give you rest.' O, May, do you not feel that the invitation is to you? Are you not heavy-laden and do you not feel that rest? Listen further, he says, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' O, how can you resist his gentle pleadings, when you so much need his love. Only trust him; accept his promises, and in his arms he will take and shield you, then let the world treat you as it may, you can close your eyes upon it all, knowing that he is your friend always; for he has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' "

"Indeed I am heavy-laden," sobbed May, "and oh, how I long for that rest and peace of which you speak, but I am too unworthy; my sister whom I have always loved and still love, though she will not speak to me now, says that my doom is sealed, there is no religion for such as I."

"If your sister believes that," replied Mrs. Danton, "she misunderstands the Scriptures. Do not let that trouble you; for surely the promises are all on your side. The Savior died to save such as you. Have you never read of how he saved the thief on the cross, and of how Paul said that he had saved him who was the chief of sinners, and of the poor unfortunate woman to whom he said, 'Go and sin no more?' 'Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool,' says Holy Writ. The blood of Christ cleanseth from sin; and you have only to believe this, and that he will save you—trust him fully, nothing doubting and you will realize

sweet peace, 'such peace as the world giveth not!' I believe the Lord will bless you if you only seek him aright—something tells me that ere this meeting winds to a close you will be purified and ready to meet little Cleave on the Beautiful Shore."

"What a weight you have lifted from my over-burdened heart, for I am now convinced that there is mercy even for such as I, and I am determined to seek until I obtain pardon. I shall not forget your interest for me and to-night will fulfil the promise I have made you," said May as she arose to go.

CHAPTER V.

BLESSED.

May Vernon did as she had promised. That night when the invitation was extended, she was the first of the many that flocked to the altar of prayer. Casting herself on her knees she poured out her soul in earnest supplication to God for mercy. Deep feeling pervaded the entire assembly. It was a scene that must have enlisted the sympathy of angels. The Christians were deeply moved and actively engaged in instructing their various friends. But one who had hitherto been a zealous worker among the penitents sat stern and immovable. It was none other than May's august sister, Mrs. Waldon. In the pew behind her sat Mrs. Danton. With a heart full of sadness she leaned over and softly whispered, "Mrs. Waldon, will you not go to May and speak one little word? It would be a sweet comfort to her in this hour of grief, and perhaps God would bless it to the saving of her soul. Only this evening she told me how

much she loved you and how she longed to again hear your voice. Now will you not go?"

"I can't do that; I never expect to speak to her while I live. And as to her saying she loves me, don't you believe it; she doesn't mean a word of it," came the answer as icily as if it had been blown from the Arctic regions.

Mrs. Danton drew away, feeling as if an arrow had pierced her heart. What could she do? Not only did May need the prayers of Christians but also of that sister, who, only a few days since, had sent glad shouts to heaven over the conversion of some friend, but now refused to assist in rescuing that perishing one bound by the nearest ties of relationship.

May continued to seek with all the powers of her nature, but not until the following evening, after she had reached her home—that home which had become to her almost a tomb, so rank had the weeds and thistles grown up around it—did the blessing come. But it did come and the burden of sorrow was lifted, the old home became a paradise, and May was a child of God. When Mrs. Danton met her at church that night, how the face that had been so full of tears was transformed. A glad light shone in her eyes as she embraced Mrs. Danton and whispered, "I love you so much, I love every one else too."

"I am so thankful," said Mrs. Danton. "I knew all would be right, if only you gave your heart into the sacred keeping of our dear Saviour. Your first duty, now, is to join the church and be baptized; for you should endeavor to walk 'in all the commands and ordinances of the Lord blameless.'"

"I am going to join the church," she answered, "but I want to wait for Laura."

The meeting continued to grow in interest. The day following May's profession was an experience meeting. Many of the brethren and some of the sisters told what great things God had done for them; and as their minds were carried back to the time when they first passed from darkness to light, they were made happy in remembrance of the occasion. The spirit of God was poured out among his people. Those who had been at enmity shook hands in token of forgiveness. Mrs. Houston was called on to pray. Without hesitation she knelt, surrounded by Christians and sinners, and with earnestness and pathos made intercession for all. When the amen was pronounced audible sobs were heard throughout the church, and it seemed that every heart was melted to tears. Mrs. Danton, thinking that this was the auspicious time, with a voice full of emotion, again addressed May's sister:

"Will you not speak to May now?" she pleaded.

"No, I won't," came the decisive answer.

"How can you act so?" asked Mrs. Danton. "You are surely not more just than the God you worship; and he has forgiven her."

"But we don't know that he has," was the curt reply.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged, and remember that with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again," said Mrs. Danton as she turned away with an aching heart. Perplexed and grieved, she asked herself, "What more can I do?" As if in answer to her query the choir sang out,

"Take everything to God in prayer."

CHAPTER VI.

PERSECUTED.

Several were awaiting the ordinance of baptism, and it was whispered around that May Vernon, not having had an opportunity of joining the church, would present herself at the water as a candidate for immersion; and that Mrs. Danton was urging her up to it. Clayton, like all villages, was addicted to gossip, and with this the ball started; round and round it went, growing larger at each revolution.

"I will leave the church at once if they take her in," said Mrs. Benton, treasurer of the Sunday-school.

"I'll never fellowship with May Vernon on earth," said pious Mrs. Morton. "I reckon she'll want to visit our houses next; they say she's already been to Mrs. Danton's and had her arms around her."

"Well, I'll take my letter from the church and never enter this house again if she's received," said Mrs. Walton.

Others said nothing, but stood aloof from Mrs. Danton, and treated her as coldly as they did May. Yet every day and night the choir sang with energy and spirit,

"Rescue the perishing.
Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the *erring ones*,
Lift up the *fallen*,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

Was it a crime for Mrs. Danton to advise May to follow God's command and join the church? If it *was*

so considered by the members of the Clayton church, little did Mrs. Danton care. It was her Master's cause in which she was engaged, and her conscience approved what her Bible told her was right.

The baptizing came off, but May Vernon was not one of the number. Vague rumors had reached her ears. No opportunity had been given for her reception at the water, and it was now clear to her that it was not the intention that she should become a member of the Clayton church. While she stood watching the administration of the ordinance her mind ran back to the baptism of the dear Saviour, and she longed to follow in his footsteps. She believed, and here was water, and yet she was hindered from being baptized; but she felt that she would not be held responsible for this omission of duty, and that though earthly friends had forsaken her, there was one whose promises are everlasting—the one on whose strong arm she was now leaning.

The baptizing over, all repaired to the church, where services were opened by singing:

"I will sing you a song of that beautiful land,
The far away home of the soul.
Where no storms ever beat on that glittering strand,
While the years of eternity roll."

* * * * *

"Oh, how sweet it will be in that beautiful land,
So free from all sorrow and pain;
With songs on our lips and with harps in our hands,
To meet one another again."

Mrs. Danton sat bathed in tears during the singing of this song, for she felt that these Clayton Christians had decided that May Vernon should have no part with them in that "home of the soul," and that they would have her voice, which once led in the choir, but was now

hushed in sadness,—that they would have that voice stilled in that beautiful land, with no song on her lips and no harp in her hand. A still, small voice seemed to whisper, “They are keeping my child away,” and she wondered if Jesus was not weeping over the lamb he had chosen, but who had not been permitted to enter His fold. “God in Heaven, forgive,” she prayed, “they know not what they do.”

How Brother Holton, Mr. and Mrs. Houston fought for May Vernon! How grand and noble appeared Brother Holton, after Mrs. Vernon had told the church of the many trials through which she had passed, and of her perfect faith in God through all her sorrows, when he sprang up, extended her his hand and said, “God bless you, sister Vernon.” How the members followed his example! How they gathered around Mrs. Vernon, as if eager to show their appreciation of that Christian spirit which had enabled her through all her trials to say, “Not my will but thine be done.”

Still May was left out and the gossip continued.

Brother Holton lectured his charge every day on the duty of Christians; warned them against the too liberal use of that unruly member, the tongue; told them of the evils of “they say,” etc. He urged them to make their lives consistent with their profession, saying, “You sing, ‘Lift up the fallen;’ go and do it.” And yet no change came; sinners were still pleading for mercy, but it seemed that God, in sorrow and anger, withheld the blessing. Christians grew colder, and a dark cloud hovered over the meeting. For days no conversion crowned the labors of God’s people though there were scores of anxious seekers. It was under these circumstances that Brother Holton arose and said that

he had a proposition for those who had the moral courage and candor, and the salvation of sinners at heart sufficiently to enter into it. It was that every one, who was willing earnestly to pray God to remove the cause that hindered the conversion of those anxious souls, would come into the altar at prayer and extend him their hand in token of such a resolution. "And remember," said he, "that you are to pray for the removal of the hindering cause—whatever that may be, even if it requires the sacrifice of my life, or your life; for what is the life of a man in comparison with the salvation of these sinners. Think before you act, and if you can't enter into it in deep earnestness, don't come; for I believe that were a man to trifle in such a matter as this, God would strike him dead."

CHAPTER VII.

BAPTIZED.

It was a serious time. Silence pervaded the assembly, and with faces pale as death but with steps firm and decided, the Christians thronged the altar to enter into this covenant, and Mrs. Waldon was one of the number. But the hindering cause was not removed and in grief Brother Holton closed the meeting the following night.

Another came, however, a stranger, and took up the broken fragments of the meeting. After a while God in pity sent his messenger and many hearts were made to rejoice. May's brother and his wife Laura, the Laura whom she was waiting for, and the brother for whom she had prayed so earnestly, were made happy by the

atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Soon after, these three and many others joined the church. When May presented herself, her sister, unforgiving still, walked down the long aisle and passed out of the church, determined never on earth to recognize her as a Christian; and some sympathizing friends whispered:

"Farewell, sister Waldon; she is done with this church forever." How angels must have wept over the scene!

Again Clayton was in confusion. Some who had joined with May refused to be baptized with her; and her brother advised her to wait until Brother Holton's return, saying, good humoredly, "Don't think, sister, that I am ashamed to be baptized with you; but so much trouble has arisen I think it best that you should wait."

She willingly consented; never through any of her trials becoming offended with any one, but protesting all the while that she loved everybody, and could forgive them all their unkindness, as she knew God had forgiven her.

Brother Overton, the strange preacher, had heard her history, and her fair sweet face, so full of sadness had for him a peculiar fascination.

The last night of his stay an elderly gentleman, who was visiting Clayton, came forward to unite himself with the church. He was to be immersed at sunrise the next morning as Brother Overton was going to leave. May knew that Mr. Stanton would not object to her being baptized with him, and by Brother Overton's advice she promised to meet him at the water. The morning dawned bright and beautiful and the little crowd gathered on the banks of Carson creek. Mr. Stanton came first, then Mr. Weston, wife and brother, those

who had refused to be present on the former occasion, thinking that May would be there. The ordinance was administered and all were about ready to leave when May arrived. She was warmly greeted by Brother Overton, and supported only by him, was soon entering the placid stream.

Was it the hand of providence that made May Vernon's baptism so pure that none of the Clayton Christians, with feelings of bitterness rankling in their hearts, was permitted to enter the water with her? We know not; but as they stood in the midst of the stream—the administrator and the subject—an imaginative mind might have reverted to the time when Jesus, in Jordan, was baptized of John. And though no heavens opened, on this occasion, May Vernon was fulfilling all righteousness, and she felt in her heart that her Father was well pleased.

Brother Overton bade adieu to his new-found friends little dreaming when and where would be his next meeting with May Vernon.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIUMPHANT.

Years have come and gone. May Vernon's life has been a beautiful story of self-sacrifice. She has been an ornament to the church, and has endeared herself to many a heart in Clayton. Employment having been given her she has been enabled to purchase a little home for herself and mother, which, in the unselfishness of her nature, she has deeded to Mrs. Vernon. What bright hopes they were building for a long life of happiness.

But, alas! again a dark shadow falls across May's heart and home. Mrs. Vernon has become a victim to that dread disease, consumption. Oh, how May's whole life goes out to God in prayer, that he will let this cup pass; that he will spare her last, best, and only friend! How she tries to say, "Not my will, but thine be done," and how she administers to the wants of her darling mother! Night and day as if superhuman strength were given her, she watches by the bedside of the sufferer; and she is repaid by the caresses of the thin hands that stroke her hair, and the weak voice that says: "God will bless you, my May, for your devotion to your mother. You have done all on earth a child could do for a mother, and I love you, my precious child, I love you."

But Mrs. Waldon, May's unforgiving sister, came not near the dying mother; and Mrs. Waldon was one of the most devout Christians that claimed membership in the Clayton church. But her mother had not closed the doors on May; instead had allowed her to return home and bring disgrace on the family, and this the proud Mrs. Waldon could never forgive. For this she broke off all connections with her mother and never looked on her face again.

So it was May, broken-hearted little May, who stood alone, with only a brother, by the side of the dying mother. It was only May who clasped the icy hands, and kissed the pallid lips. And only May who followed the darling mother to her last resting place.

But it was not May who, a few weeks afterward, employed a lawyer to investigate the business affairs. No; it was none other than the pious Mrs. Waldon, who now, for the sake of a few paltry dollars, was not too proud to claim heirship to the property of Mrs. Vernon;

and, though she knew it was justly May's, availed herself of a technicality of the law to possess herself of that which May's own money had purchased.

But May leaves everything; for home is home to her no longer. She goes south with a lady friend, and has no sooner arrived at Mobile than that direful disease, yellow fever, breaks out. Like a sister of charity girded with the Christian's hope, she goes out to nurse the sick and the dying. In a hospital where she has lingered night and day, a face and form strangely familiar are by her side. It is the minister, Brother Overton, and he recognizes in the sweet sister of charity the saddened girl whom he baptized in Carson creek years ago. Accounts of her pure life of self sacrifice have reached him many a time, and as he gazes on this woman, so gentle, so beautiful, with the imprint of a Christian stamped on every lineament, he is proud to know that it is May Vernon, and that her image has never left his heart. She knows now that he has loved her all these years, and a band of gold gleams on her first finger. She has promised to wed a minister, and that minister Brother Overton. They are standing by the bedside of one who in wild delirium is begging for May. He says: "How cruelly I have wronged her! O, that she were here to forgive me, for how can I die with this great sin darkening my soul?"

Bending closer May scans his features. In the wild blood-shot eyes and emaciated form she recognizes her seducer, Carl Marsden. The light of reason dawns once more upon him, and he knows that his nurse is May Vernon.

"Oh! May, can you forgive me?" he asks.

"I have forgiven you long ago, Carl Marsden," she

answers; "but no one can help you but Jesus. Go to him, and plead for pardon. Your crimes are great but he can remove them all. Make your peace with God for your time on earth is brief."

"Do you hate me?" he asks.

"I once did; but God has taken all that away, and I pity you now," she answers.

"Will you tell me of our boy?"

"Little Cleave is in heaven."

"It is better so," he answers sadly; "would that I were prepared to meet him. Oh, May, I have cruelly wronged you. I think I must have been mad in those days, but I was under the baleful influence of that woman who blighted our lives. I wanted to get you out of my way, and cared not how. I knew you were so trusting, so innocent, that you would believe anything I told you, and would never investigate further.

"After I was freed from the hateful fetters that held me, as if in the bonds of Satan, I intended to come back, and on bended knee implore your pardon, and prove to the world you were my wife; for you are indeed, my lawful wedded wife, and you will find the records in the clerk's office in the city of E—"

"Thank God," said May, "my innocence can at last be proved. But your great wrong did its work, Carl Marsden, and God will hold you responsible for the life you have almost ruined."

"But you will forgive me, May? Now won't you kiss me once,—only once before I die, for the sake of our boy; for the sake of the love you once bore me?"

"Do not ask me," she answered, as she shudderingly drew away. "I forgive you all; but my lips shall forever be pure for one, and that one is the man I am soon to marry."

Reaching out his hand as if he understood, he placed her hand in that of Brother Overton, and his lips moved as if in prayer. They stood by him for a long while. A change came over his pallid features and his hand dropped to his side. He whispered, "I am going to little Cleave," and Carl Marsden was no more.

The yellow fever has subsided, and May and her friends have traveled all over the South. But now they are homeward bound and May is happy, for she will soon be with her brother and Laura.

Clayton is once more thrown into a state of excitement, and the gossipers are traveling at a lively rate.

"They say—May Vernon is actually going to marry."

"And to the preacher that baptized her."

"And that she *really* was married to Carl Marsden. And that he is dead."

"And that Carl told her where to find the proof of their marriage, and that she has a certified copy of the records," etc., etc.

Already the marriage bells are ringing in the old Clayton church where our heroine has been despised and rejected. Brother Holton is waiting. Mr. and Mrs. Houston, Mr. and Mrs. Danton enter first. May says she wants her best-loved friends near. Then comes the bride, radiantly beautiful, on the arm of Brother Overton. A large crowd has assembled. Brother Holton in his most impressive manner performs the ceremony. "Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

What means this great commotion? Some one pressing through the dense crowd has clasped May in a warm embrace, and through her tears is saying:

"Darling sister, can you forgive the wrongs I have inflicted upon you?"

May kisses her as she says: "Long ago, sweet sister, in this very church, when God first touched my heart, I forgave you."

But other friends are crowding up with congratulations, and Brother Holton, as he grasps the hands of the bride and groom, says: "God be praised."

And Brother Houston says, "Amen."

WEARY.

Weary, oh, so weary,
And the years they seem so long,
Since you held me close, dear mother,
And I heard your low, sweet song.

Weary, oh, so weary,
And the way is dark;—no light
'Lumes the pathway of your offspring;
Lone she walks in silent night.

Weary, oh, so weary
Of the cold, the false, the untrue,
How my heart is yearning, yearning,
Yearning, mother, dear, for you.

Weary, oh, so weary,
Months have ripened into years
Since I on your lap in childhood,
Felt you kiss away my tears.

Weary, oh, so weary,
In those arms to rest once more,
There to weep out all my sorrow,
On your bosom as of yore.

Weary, oh, so weary,
Even Heaven's far away,—
For your child now walks in darkness,
Heeding not the light of day.

Weary, oh, so weary,
Yet the promise,—oh how blest,—
I will claim, for Jesus promised,—
Come and “I will give thee rest.”

Weary, oh, so weary,
Longing just to touch the Hand
That will lead me thro’ the valley
To the blissful summer land.

[ADDED BY E. L. S.]

Weary then no longer,
In that Heavenly land I’ll dwell
Ever singing with the angels,
Halleluiah: all is well!

LITTLE NINA.

“A letter from Aunt Ruth, girls,” said my mother one bright day in Spring when the air was rich with perfume and the birds wild with delight. “A letter from Aunt Ruth,” she said, and crossing the room, handed it to me.

“Oh! it is the same old story,” said my elder sister in injured tones, “she never cares to extend her invitation to any one but Nina, and we don’t care to hear from her, for she is as gloomy as midnight at any rate.”

“For shame, girls,” said my mother, “if you knew Aunt Ruth’s story you would not speak thus. But this time she has invited all three of you to spend the summer with her.”

“We would rather go to some watering place than to her old country home,” said my sister, “and so we will not accept our old Auntie’s invitation; Nina, I presume, would enjoy it, and Mama, dear, she can take our places.”

I was only too glad to hear my mother say: “Well, Nina can go this time, for Aunt Ruth has sent an invitation every summer for three years, and we have never gratified this whim of hers; and then she never has seen Nina and she named her too.”

I was the youngest of three daughters and the coming winter was to witness my *debut* into society.

Our home was in the city and oh! how often I had longed for the green fields, the blooming orchards and the budding trees I remembered seeing when a child at my Grandpa's.

It was a lovely morning in June, and the long blades of grass were dripping with dew, when the lumbering train deposited me with my baggage at the depot in the little old-fashioned town of Milford. A carriage was in waiting and a pleasant-faced individual with the air of a countryman doffed his hat to me and asked if I was the lady Mrs. Ruth Grey expected. I told him I was, and soon I was in the carriage and whirling toward my unknown aunt's. I shall never forget the picture that dawned on my enraptured vision as the carriage rolled up the broad drive. Beauty and richness shone in everything. I was met at the entrance by a lady prematurely old. Her silvery hair sat on her head like a crown of glory, while in her face were traces of sadness that had grown beautiful through the peace that dwelt in her heart. I gazed on her in wrapt admiration and thought of Swedenborg's angels that are often with us, but not of us.

She gave me one look and a deathly pallor overspread her face:

"You are—"

"Nina," I answered.

She caught me in her arms and said: "My little Nina has indeed come back to me."

I was ushered into a handsomely furnished apartment, and nothing but days of happiness followed. How my sisters would have envied me if they had only known what it was to be at Aunt Ruth's home. I only regretted that all my summers had not been spent with

her, for she said I brought sunshine to her heart and home. She fancied there was a striking resemblance in my face to one she had loved and lost; the one whose name I bore. In her room hung the picture of her little Nina, and she had promised to tell me her story. So one lovely afternoon we drove to the cemetery and entered the silent city of the dead. Toward an enclosure, where gleamed a lofty monument with a sculptured angel poising on its summit, we directed our steps. Opening the iron gate we passed through and I stood by the grave of Aunt Ruth's darling. Flowers bloomed on all sides and no weeds were allowed to enter there. Casting ourselves on the rustic seat, with the balmy breeze kissing our cheeks and a red-bird refreshing us with his notes as he swung in the swaying bough above, Aunt Ruth poured out her heart's history and as she told it to me I now tell to you.

AUNT RUTH'S STORY.

"Twenty years ago and yet it seems but yesterday that Nina came to live with us. Beautiful, bright-eyed little Nina; bringing sunshine wherever her presence was felt. To my parents she was a priceless treasure, bequeathed them by my mother's dying sister; while to me she was the sole shadow in my pathway, the only cloud obscuring my life-sky. From the moment she entered our home I looked on her as a usurper—as one who had no right to the love that hitherto had all been my own.

"Sweet, patient little Nina! Ah, if I could only have her by my side as in the olden time I would ask no sweeter pleasure than to smooth the rugged path for her little, tired feet, to kiss the tears from those trem-

bling eyelids and whisper that in all the world there has been none half so dear to me!

“But time rolls on and from the anguish of years gone by comes only the cry, ‘Too late.’ Up there, perhaps, where angel Nina has gone, I shall find peace for this aching heart, and rest in the presence of God.

“I was only two years Nina Bernard’s senior and a romping girl of twelve, the very personification of health, with brown eyes and dark, curling hair. I was called a little beauty until her face shone in our midst, and then as a dethroned queen I felt my sceptre departing. Jealousy filled my heart and brain and never a kind word did I give the little girl whose pleading eyes would fill with tears as she would say:

“ ‘Ruth, don’t you love me?’

“I would turn abruptly from her side and push her from me and the sight of her weeping at my rudeness only caused my heart to harden.

“My parents noticed my ill temper and unkindness to Nina, and at first only appealed to my better nature, but I grew worse and at one time they punished me severely. After that I was careful to betray no emotions of jealousy in their presence.

“I knew Nina’s face was the loveliest I had ever gazed upon; fair as an angel’s with blue eyes and golden hair. She did not look like a child of earth, and as I recall the past it seems that none but a heart of stone could have resisted the sweet voice of that little girl. She was as frail as she was fair, and though almost my own age she did not look more than half my years.

“She could not run and play as I did, for little Nina was a cripple, her feet were twisted, almost hideous to look at, and yet I envied her the beauty of her angel-face.

“When we would start to school at morning mama would kiss us both and tell me to walk by Nina’s side and lead her, for her feet could not keep pace with my active ones and she would often fall in trying to walk as fast as I did. I can now hear her bird-like voice saying: ‘Ruth, please wait, I can’t keep up with you.’ But I would hurry on and in harsh tones answer: ‘Come on Nina; you just don’t want to walk fast. I know if you would try you could walk as good as I can.’ And often I would leave her while some kind school-mate would lead her to school.

“It seems that I had no conscience or I would have felt a pang when she always spoke so lovingly and kindly to me; but my remorse came afterwards when I was powerless to prove to Nina how sorry I was for my waywardness. Then I only wanted her out of my way and I cared not when or how she was taken. She could not go home for dinner on bad days although we lived near, and in loving tones she would request me to bring her something to eat. My answer, always cross and in a sneering manner would be: ‘Nina, I believe you think you are only a baby for me to wait on.’

“I have seen her burst into tears and go hobbling home while every moment she was in danger of falling and breaking some of her limbs; but I cared not; I almost felt like I would rejoice over such an occurrence. I shall never forget her last day in school; its events are imprinted on my memory in burning letters—letters that have haunted me all these years. She learned much faster than I did, which added fuel to the flame of jealousy, for I felt that she was my rival in everything pertaining to happiness. On this last day we sat together in a large spelling class; a word after going

nearly all around the class, came to Nina, who in her low, sweet voice spelled it correctly; but seeing that the teacher did not understand, I spelled it the same way in louder tones and passed to the head of the class. She gave me one reproachful look and tears rolled down her cheeks, but she said nothing. I returned her glance defiantly and with a revengeful feeling which makes me shudder even now as I recall it and think of the wicked expression that must have shown in my countenance.

“Little did I dream that this would be my last look on that beautiful face, that when I again beheld her she would be changed beyond recognition. I went home that night with one of my schoolmates who lived a few miles in the country. The following morning I was sent for in great haste. A terrible accident had happened; Nina was burned almost to death! Oh! shall I ever forget my feelings when I reached home and stood by the bed-side of dying Nina? That sweet face was seared as with a red hot iron, the long, curling eyelashes were scorched, the golden hair bronzed by the cruel flames, and the beautiful eyes closed, I thought, forever. But she opened them once and said, “Ruth.” I fell on my knees by her bedside while convulsive sobs shook my frame. I entreated forgiveness, imprinting kiss after kiss on the little hands. A smile lit up her face; there was a slight tremor, and little Nina had gone to God. She had indeed been taken away; but how desolate was I left! How I missed the precious little darling I had treated so cruelly! I would have given half my life to hold her in my arms, feel her kisses on my face, and hear words of forgiveness from those lips now sealed in death.

“My mother took me in her lap and tried to point

me to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. But I was inconsolable and for days and weeks raved in wild delirium with brain fever brought on by grief and excitement. When the fever left me it seemed that years had been added to my age, and since then I have tried to live a better life.

“When they told me that little Nina cried the night I staid from home and said she was lonely without Ruth; when I learned how she caught fire—that she was dressing my doll and lost her needle and in her search for it got too near the flames and was almost consumed ere help came—I realized that it was for me she gave up her young life, and all my cruelty and heartlessness came fresh to my memory and it seemed more than I could bear. I fled to this little mound that marks the spot where they laid her, and casting myself on it, besought Nina to come back to me.

“Years have gone by since then and I feel that this one sorrow has whitened my hair and stamped my face with traces of care; but there is a hope that lights up the future and makes my yoke easy. When the summons of death comes, I feel that I shall go rejoicing, for up there in the Beautiful City I shall find my cherished Nina waiting for me.”

I was sobbing audibly when Aunt Ruth finished her story and when I looked through my tears she was on her knees beside the little mound in an attitude of prayer. Directly she arose and her countenance was still lit up as if she had been communing with an angel.

“Come, Nina, let us go home,” she said. “It will not be long until Aunt Ruth will be called to meet the little angel she so wronged.”

I have always believed in presentiments since then, for that very night I was summoned to Aunt Ruth's bedside. The young physician of whom she had told me so much, and who had assisted in making my stay so pleasant, was there, and also the old housekeeper. I read in their countenances at once that there was no hope. It was heart disease, said Dr. Granville, to which she had been a great sufferer. All night we three watched by the side of the dying, and when the early grey morning came stealing through the open window, she clasped my hand and placed in it that of Dr. Granville, and said as a sweet smile flitted over her face:

"I am going; -Nina awaits me, and never more shall we be parted. Dr. Granville loves you, my earthly Nina, make him happy and live here in Aunt Ruth's house; it is yours. Keep sacred the little mound I so treasured, and meet me where my heavenly Nina dwells." She sank back among the pillows and poor Aunt Ruth's weary soul was at rest.

After the funeral I returned to my city home, but was not allowed long to remain there. Ere my *debut* into society was made the next winter, Dr. Granville had claimed me as his bride.

Aunt Ruth, it was found, had bequeathed me her vast estate and in her dear old home we reside. I have a little Nina now, and by the two graves we often sit while I tell her Aunt Ruth's story.

MY BROKEN LILY.

Faint, weary and foot-sore, I traversed my lonely way through a barren plain, with lofty mountains looming on either side. On and on I pressed through narrow gorges, with frightful chasms yawning sometimes at my very feet. No song of birds greeted my listening ears, no blooming flowers filled the air with fragrance, and no childish hand held on to mine in loving trust. In mute anguish, I had stood by the graves of loved ones. Childhood's home had passed away. Alone I paused with only the hand of Faith to guide me through the darkness. Gently I was led into a valley where flowers bloomed in wildest profusion, and not far away a broken Lily, the fairest of all, bowed her head in deepest sadness. Upward she looked to me in love, and gathering my treasure close in all her regal beauty, I imprinted kisses on her waxen lips. A smile of gladness lit up her snowy face and I knew my presence had healed the broken flower. In my heart I reared a temple with spires of glittering whiteness pointing ever toward that "house not made with hands." The windows were radiant with beams of love. Steps of burnished gold led up to the grand entrance. Within was an altar of precious stones, and ever fragrant with the odor of incense burning thereon. Here, in this Temple of Beauty, I placed my broken Lily,—pure, lovely and true— with a nobility

and grandeur of soul pervading every breath that exhaled from her sweet lips. Here Love's offerings were brought, and queen of my temple, I crowned my broken Lily. Here the birds sang their notes of love, and the flowers bloomed, breathing love in their very fragrance. My heart overflowed with a happiness that lit up my temple with floods of sunlight. The days knew no shade of sorrow, and on bended knee, I thanked God for a gift so precious as my broken Lily.

But a change came,—a day that hated to look on happiness. Faith no longer walked by my side, Hope and Love had plumed their wings for flight, the birds were hushed into silence, and the flowers became as dead-sea fruits. My temple, with all its magnificence, trembled and fell to the earth a mass of ruins, 'neath which are buried throne and queen and Hope and Love, and the night winds sweeping by ever whisper,—“Broken faith; buried hopes.”

TO THE MEADOWS.

There's beauty in the rose's blush,
A fragrance in the breath of Spring;
There's gladness in the sunshine's glow,
When dew-drops to the lilies cling;
There's life within the meadows green
Where silv'ry streamlets smoothly flow,
Where perch and cat-fish dive and plunge
In cooling waters far below.

O, let me hie to meadows green,
Where blooms the clover, red and white,
Where butterflies, all gaily decked,
Flit through the shimmering, dazzling light,
Where busy bees suck up the sweets
From out the honey-cups of gold,
And roses pink, among the leaves
Their glorious beauties all unfold.

Away, away to meadows green,
Where limpid brooklets calmly flow,
Where zephyrs kiss the emerald sea,
And grassy wavelets come and go.
Where willows nod their graceful heads
In th' water's mirroring crystal sheen,
And daisies dot the meadow's breast,
With modest violets in between.

My dreams flit o'er the em'rald sea
To sunny isles of sweet Sometime,
Where all my hopes will rest at last,
On th' glit'ring shores of sunny clime;
My ship comes in with stores of years,
That drifted o'er the boundless main,
On Fancy's isle of glint and gold
My dreams will all be mine again.

ETHEL HUNTINGTON'S LESSON.

"Mamma, pease et me do pay wiv Willie Bennett," said little Roy Huntington, as he came into the kitchen where his mother was hurrying to get dinner ready for the many workhands her husband kept employed on his farm. The day was warm, and with one little annoyance and another she was very much out of humor, and when little Roy addressed her she answered in impatient tones:

"Get out of here, Roy, and don't let me see you in here again; I don't care where you go, so you are out of my way."

The ringing tones of her voice had no sooner died away than here came Compton, the next older boy.

"Mamma, I'm hungry; pease give me a piece of bread."

"Leave the room at once, Compton, and wait until dinner is ready."

"Mamma," said Lulu, entering the kitchen, "I'm going to see May Herndon."

"Go on, go anywhere, do anything to give me a little peace; you children are nothing but a nuisance, and I wish I didn't have one in the world."

Little Roy's big blue eyes opened wider with wonder at his mother's frowning visage, for he had not gone to see Willie Bennett, but stood in the door-way waiting

for Compton, who had failed to get the bread his little stomach was craving.

"Roy, if you and Compton come into this kitchen any more to-day, worrying me, I will whip you both," said Mrs. Huntington, slamming the stove door with such violence that the little boys both jumped and started at once for their play-ground.

Mrs. Huntington went on with her work, sighing as she saw the wealthy Mrs. Arner drive by in her carriage.

"And I could have been Mrs. Arner," she murmured, "but I let love blind me to everything, and took the poor physician. While my life is nothing but drudgery, with a houseful of children to worry me, hers is all sunshine—no children, nothing to keep her from being happy."

She did not contrast her young, handsome husband with the gouty, cross, old Mr. Arner who, everybody said, was the husband of a woman that married him for his money.

But Ethel's thoughts wandered to her girlhood days, and she wished she had never married. "Anything but this life that is crushing out all the sweetness of my nature," she thought, as she glanced at the door and saw that the sun had reached the twelve o'clock mark. Then, going to the door, she gave the farm bell an energetic ringing for the work-hands, after which she busied herself about setting the table.

Ethel Huntington had been a beauty in her young days, and they were not so many years back, either. Many a suitor had bowed at her shrine, but Dr. Huntington was the one her heart declared his king. They had started up life's hill together, and he had tried to

brighten his wife's pathway all along; but the little ones had come and the farm life was hard, and, with this struggle and that, Ethel had grown bitter and was no longer the bright girl who had promised her husband so much happiness.

The dinner hour was over, Lulu had not returned, and Roy and Compton had eaten their dinner in silence, excepting an occasional sob, for their ears were tingling with the slaps their mother had given each for for being so careless at the table. She had dismissed the little boys, and failed not to remind them that she wanted to rest and didn't want to see their faces any more that afternoon. So the little fellows went out and threw themselves disconsolately on the grass under the shade of a spreading tree.

"Tump, I d'wish we tould do to heaven," said Roy as he cuddled up by his brother's side, "do you weckon it's very far off?"

"I dess not," answered Compton, "for Willie Bennett's little bruver has gone there, tause I heard Willie say so; but I don't want to do the way his bruver went, tause he went in a white wobe an' a toffin. I want to do in a buggy and wide wight into heaven's date."

"You weckon Jesus would et us tum in, Tump, if we was to do a widin'? And maybe he'd dit tired of us, too, like mamma."

"Tourse he'd let us tum in, tause you know papa told us at Sunday-school how Jesus loves little children; an' I don't b'lieve he'd dit tired of us either," said Compton.

"O! I d'wish we tould do," sighed Roy, "tause mamma don't want us, sister don't want us, an' papa is always gone so he don't know what he wants."

Just then Dr. Huntington drove up in his buggy.

"Come, my little men," he called to the boys, "come and hold my horse for me a minute until I run in and get some dinner." Always glad to see their papa, the little boys bounded to the gate. "Just watch my old horse, Compton, and he will stand perfectly still until I am ready for him."

Compton and Roy did as their father directed, and he went hurriedly to eat his dinner, for he had other patients needing his attention.

"Here is our buggy, Roy," said Compton, "es dit in an' do to heaven."

"Won't papa stold?" said Roy.

"No," answered Compton, bravely, "not when he knows we are doin' to heaven. I'm doin' Roy; an' if you want to be an angel you'll have to hurry." And with this Compton climbed into the buggy.

"Tump, if you is doin' su' 'nough, I want to do, too."

"Well, jump in twick," said Compton, and the next moment Roy was by Compton's side, and the horse was moving. Feeling no strong hand held him, he started out at a rapid gait; faster, faster he flew, and the rumbling of wheels reached the ears of Dr. Huntington, who got out only in time to see his horse running at utmost speed and carrying along the buggy—but where were the children?

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed.

They were in the buggy. The news soon spread, and friends and neighbors with wildly beating hearts sped after the runaways.

"God in heaven, have mercy!" screamed Ethel as she fell fainting to the floor.

On and on went the horse up hill, down hill, over bridges, and turning lanes, leaving the village far behind, while the little brothers, clasped in each other's arms, thought they were, indeed, going to heaven. But the horse, having run his race, and being exhausted, fell in the harness, carrying the buggy and its occupants over with him.

Dr. Huntington, far in advance of those who followed, from the top of a hill nearly half a mile away, saw the horse fall and the buggy overturn. Arriving at the spot, with a sickening heart, pale, haggard, and trembling in every limb, he closed his eyes a moment that he might bear the shocking sight of his two little dead boys. What was his surprise when he had courage to look and two bright faces met his gaze, while Roy said:

"Papa, we started to heaven."

Dr. Huntington clasped them both to his heart as he realized the full import of Roy's words, and through his smiles and tears kissed them fondly.

"Papa, what you twy for; tause you fink Jesus wouldn't have us, eder?" asked Roy.

"O! Papa's glad—glad to have his boys back"—he chokingly answered.

Surely God had held them in the hollow of His hand, for not even the slightest bruise told of the fearful ride they had taken. The little boys were joyfully escorted home, and Ethel clasped them to her heart in a prayer of thanksgiving as she bathed their faces with her tears; and that night, as she knelt by the little darlings, she thanked God for giving back her boys.

The following morning Dr. Huntington brought in a cook and a house-maid, and taking Ethel's hand he led her into the parlor, saying:

“My dear little wife, I feel that God has sent us this experience to teach us a lesson, for we were living for the sordid things of earth, forgetting even our duty to our children. Now I am succeeding in my financial affairs beyond our fondest hopes, and there is no need of this life of drudgery I am imposing on you. Together we have struggled, henceforth your happiness shall be greater than even that of Mrs. Arner. Our hardships are over, and we will now enjoy the fruits of our labors.”

Compton and Roy are never driven from the house now, and Compton often says,

“Roy, it’s a good thing we started to heaven, for it made mamma so much better.”

TRUSTING.

I am leaving it all to Jesus,
For I think that he knows best,
And he'll send into my aching heart
A sweet and peaceful rest.

I am leaving it all to Jesus,
Though the way seems lone and cold,
Yet heavenward I am striving,
He'll lead me to his fold.

I am leaving it all with Jesus,
Though the tears bedim mine eyes,
Through the mist I am looking to Him,
Through the dark and starless skies.

I am leaving it all with Jesus,
He will give me a work to do
That will lead me up the better way
Through a life both good and true.

I am leaving it all with Jesus,
And I wait with faith to see
All I've lost upon this dreary earth
In heaven made good to me.

HOW MISS RHODY MARTIN CHEATED THE CENSUS ENUMERATOR.

The day-lilies in all their golden beauty, and the roses, from the Maiden's Blush to the Hundred Leaf, bloomed about Miss Rhody Martin's door. The Madeira vine, with its clusters of creamy blossoms, rich with fragrance, clambered over the porch, and the sparrows flitted in and out through the lattice-work, twittering as they built their nests under the eaves, or fed their hungry young. It was a balmy morning in June, and a slight breeze stirred the leaves and set the bees to humming as they sucked the sweets from the blooming flowers. A red-bird in a cage kept up a soul-inspiring melody in answer to one that haunted a neighboring rose bush where his mate sat complacently on her eggs.

Out on the vine clad porch, Miss Rhody Martin, a spinster on the shady side of fifty, rocked to and fro, while the clicking of her knitting needles kept time to the music of her chair.

Isaac Hughey, Miss Rhody's nephew, a fair specimen of manhood, sat not many paces away, half-buried in a newspaper, and with his feet resting on the banister higher than his head, true Kentucky style. He had come in from hoeing the cabbage to get a cool drink of water and for a moment's rest, and he and Miss Rhody were all unconscious of the picture of sweet contentment they were making.

Miss Rhody, notwithstanding she was called an old maid, and tried to look ten years younger than she really was, was a great favorite with the whole neighborhood, and Isaac was as great a favorite with the girls. Isaac was also a special pet of Aunt Rhody, though he did occasionally rally her on her youthful appearance, knowing that on this point she was extremely sensitive, never giving any one a chance to inquire her age.

This morning as she sat on the porch listening to the click of her needles and busy with her meditations, as if in obedience to her wishes, the gate opened and the object around whom her thoughts were clustering, came sauntering up the walk. A receptacle for his effects was swung across his shoulder after the manner of a book agent. The dog, asleep by Isaac, barked lazily once or twice, and then went back to his dreaming. While Miss Rhody looked over her spectacles, and, quick as lightning these unoffending friends of her failing vision went into her pocket.

"Isaac, hit's the Square," said Miss Rhody, starting up, "and you had better go on to your work for he looks like he wanted to see me on important business."

By this time 'Squire Doolittle was nearing the steps. Isaac smiled at Miss Rhody's cool dismissal of himself, and chuckled as he went to his work, for he knew Esquire Doolittle had been appointed census enumerator, and, for once, Aunt Rhody would have to tell her age, and to the man she wanted to marry.

Isaac was a lover of the ludicrous, and he would have given almost any sum to have heard the squire interrogating Aunt Rhody, but he was no eaves-dropper, so he went to work and soon his thoughts were all of the squire's daughter, and Aunt Rhody was forgotten.

“Good mornin’, Square,” said Aunt Rhody, “walk in and give an account of yourself; you’ve got to be a mighty stranger lately.”

“How do you do, Miss Rhody,” said the squire shaking her hand cordially.

“I’m not so mity well, thank you, Square; but the sight of an old friend sets the blood to tingling in my veins, and I forget my aches and pains, which I am happy to say are not very much my portion. But take a cheer, Square,” and she drew the chair Isaac had vacated toward her own. “How does this purty June mornin’ find you, Square?”

“Never felt better in my life, Miss Rhody—never felt better in my life,” answered the squire, tipping his chair back and looking a little pompous.

“You are looking monstrous fine, Square, but, as I said before, you’ve got to be a mity big stranger in these parts. And when I see you a-comin’ lookin’ for all the world like a book agent, I was tempted to set the dog on you, for I get so tired of so many trying to live without work.”

“Thank you, Miss Rhody, I haint bin round in a bit n’r awhile, but the truth n’r hit is I haint had the time, nor I haint a minnit to lose this mornin’,” said the squire, and continuing: “No, Miss Rhody, I am not a book agent; you are greatly mistaken about that. I have come on business of greater importance,” and he drew his chair nearer the spinster, who was smiling and trying to blush as if she really thought the all-important time had come.

“Miss Rhody,” said the squire, drawing his chair up still a little nearer, “I have come—”

“Yes, Square,” interrupted Miss Rhody, and her

knitting fell into her lap, "I see you have come, and I am always pleased to have you come."

"But, Miss Rhody, I have come to take—"

"Yes, Square," and she moved her chair a little nearer, "I know what you would say, and I am ready to—"

"But, Miss Rhody, I have come to take your senses," blurted out the squire.

"Goodness! gracious, Square, not to take what little grain of sense I've got, shorely," pretending not to understand the squire.

"That's somethin' I can't do, Miss Rhody, take your senses away—you air too smart for that—entirely too sensible to let an old fellow like me turn your head, though I mought take your reason," he said, smiling significantly at her.

"Well, I am shore if my reason was gone, my senses would be gone too," answered Miss Rhody poutingly.

"But honest injun, Miss Rhody, I haint a moment to lose, time's limited, and I've got to have this business done in a jiffy. I have come shore enough to take your senses. First place your Christian name in full and initial of middle name."

"You don't swar me, Square, to tell the truth, nothin' but the truth, so help me God, do you?"

"No, Miss Rhody, I'll take your word for anything.

"Your name, now, please," he said persuasively.

"Rhody Ann Sarah-fine Matilda Jane Martin, 'nitia and all," answered Miss Rhody.

"Very well done," answered the squire, writing it down. So one question after another was asked until the sixth question in the schedule was reached.

“Now Miss Rhody, if you please,” and the squire bent over, looked into Miss Rhody’s face and said, “what mought be your age at your last birthday?”

“My age, Square?” and there was a startled look in Miss Rhody’s eyes as she tried to gather fresh courage and take in a full breath.

“Yes,” answered the squire, “how old mought you be at your nearest birthday?”

“Well, you see, Square, I was the youngest of a large family of children. I was called the baby even after I was grown, and the way they all doted on me was no ‘countin’ for. Why Pap willed this farm to me ‘cause I was the baby, and you never see anything produce like these acres do. Isaac raises—”

“Miss Rhody, I haint got a moment to spare. You will please tell me your age in as few words as you ken kommand.”

“I was going to tell you, Square, the day I was sweet sixteen Pap give me a birthday party, and Betsy Brown was thar, but she was a heap older than I was—hit was Betsey Crater then — and she was a crater shore enuff, I tell you. She thought Tim Brown was a-settin’ up to me and she wuz that jellus she had no sense at all. She—”

“Miss Rhody, time’s limited,” said the squire a little impatiently, with his pen tightly grasped and reeking with ink, for he had dipped it in the ink-stand a half dozen times ready to write down Miss Rhody’s age.

“Your age, I say, Miss Rhody.”

“I was going to tell you, Square, thar’s Miss Edwards, first cousin to Betsey Crater, and she was a schoolmate of mine, but law, she was a heap older too,

than me. She's larnt me my lessons and led me home many a day. She—"

"Miss Rhody, I must know your age. I tell you my time is limited," said the squire, the faintest tinge of red creeping into his face.

"Jist what I started out to tell you, Square. Isaac, you know, is my nephew? Well, his mother was my sister and a little grain older than me. But law, she's been dead several years. She was monstrous pretty, my sister was, and everybody said we war as like as two peas. Isaac makes me think n'r her lots n'r times. Isaac is sich—"

"Miss Rhody, must have your age," interrupted the squire; "no time to spare—time's limited. Your age, Miss Rhody, at once." By this time the squire began to be highly colored, and beads of perspiration began to gather and trickle down his nose.

After all the June morning was not so balmy.

"Yes, yes, Square, I was going to tell you. When I begin to manage this farm, I was a chunk of a gal, and no gal uv my age could have done better. I have got along too, Square, always have somethin' to sell and I don't owe a cent. I—"

"Miss Rhody," said the squire in exasperation, "shall I write down refused?"

"Refused, Square," said Miss Rhody in great astonishment; "refused, no you shant, fur I haint refused you yit. You haint axed me, and nobody feels more for your motherless gal than I do. You see, I loved her mother, your poor dead and gone wife, Square. We were gals together, but, laws! she was a heap older than me. Yes, I know your darter needs a mother and I haint refused you, Square, nary time I haint."

“Refused me, Miss Rhody?” and a new light seemed to break upon the Squire. “Is it possible you would be a mother to my little Nancy? Will you marry me, Miss Rhody?” and he drew nearer and threw his arm over the back of her chair.

“Why, Square, if—if—you think I am old enough,” stammered Miss Rhody, “I will take your wife’s place and be a mother to your little Nancy, but Nancy’s mother was a heap older than I am.”

Miss Rhody’s cook rang the bell for dinner, Isaac came from his work, and still the squire and Miss Rhody lingered on the porch.

“Thought your time was limited, Squire,” said Isaac playfully.

“So it is, Isaac, so it is, but I’ll ketch up,” said the squire.

So, before the census was taken, Miss Rhody became Mrs. Squire Doolittle, and the squire and his lovely daughter came to Miss Rhody’s home to live. Isaac is very happy with Nannie, as he calls her, and rumor says before many months there will be another wedding at Miss Rhody’s home.

The squire completed the census, sent in his report, but of one thing we are very sure—Miss Rhody never told her age.

THE JACKSONVILLE SCOURGE.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA , September 8.—Dark overhead. Heavy black clouds chasing each other across the wild gray expanse above, the wind blowing tempestuously and the rain falling in blinding torrents. Still darker below is this city. With its rapidly increasing number of new cases of fever and the constant addition to the list of the dead, it is no wonder that Jacksonville people feel discouraged and almost ready to give up the fight and calmly await the destroyer's rapid advance.

There is gloom in the heart of the nation,
And she pales at the fatal breath
Of the enemy that lurks on her borders,
Whose quiver is filled with death.

He has come on the sultry breezes
From the land of the orange and lime,
And has entered our Sunny Southland
And infected Florida's clime.

* * * * *

Dark were the heavens, but darker the city—
The fair Southern city, now sad as a dirge—
And wild was the gale that swept from old ocean.
But wilder the people that fled from the scourge.
On came the fever—the fierce yellow fever—
Humbling the city so low in the dust,
Leveling the ranks of wealth and of beauty,
Dealing alike with the evil and just.

Magnificent steamers had sailed on her waters,
And commerce was proud to come to her shore:
And those seeking health had always found welcome
In the city that now finds "no open door."
She was proud of her lands and proud of her people,
Of her climate balmy with the ocean's breath:
Of her fruits and her orange groves, heavily laden,
And all's now a region of fever and death.

And all the great South, so new in her splendor,
But old in the sorrows that threaten her now,
Is trembling with fear from ocean to ocean.
And humiliation sits on her brow.
Out from the city—the devastated city—
Kissed by the waves of the rolling St. John,
The infection is creeping from town, lake and river,
And the inmates are fleeing, pallid and wan.

A train sped Northward, heavily freighted
With refugees frantic with grief and fright,
But quarantine strict was ever before them.
So onward they went in the darkness of night.
Atlanta had closed her doors of admission:
Chattanooga, too, was locked up in fear,
While Nashville had placed her guards upon duty,
With the watchword, "'Tis death to all who come near."

Quarantined on the north by those she had succored,
Quarantined on the east, quarantined on the west,
Quarantined on the south by disease and starvation—
Oh, where will they find a haven of rest?
Still on sped the train, with no destination,
No beacon light appeared to their view:
And the coaches were groaning with five hundred people—
A homeless, wandering, plague-stricken crew.

But an all-seeing eye is ever upon us—
An eye that will mark even the sparrow's fall—
And a hand stretches out to us through the darkness,
And an ear's ever ready to give heed to our call.

The Father looked down in pitying tenderness,
While angels drew near and held fast their breath:
Who would open doors to his grief-stricken children?
Who give a welcome even unto death?

Like a sunburst through mist and through darkness,
Louisville came forward and proffered her aid:
Opened her doors to health and contagion,
And self was forgotten in the sacrifice made,
And God smiled in love on the generous city,
And angels bent low and dropped each a tear:
It was humanity crying to heaven for mercy,
And humanity helping humanity here.

And long in their hearts will the grateful Southrons
Treasure the memory of the noble deed
Of the city that heeded their cry of distress,
And fearlessly came to her country's need.
And long will the horrors of the Jacksonville scourge
Haunt, like a spectre, the bright land of flowers.
God grant that never again such a plague
Shall fall, like a blight, on this fair land of ours.

GERANIUMS.

Only a box of Geraniums,
Dewy, and fragrant, and sweet,
Yet a message of love they whisper
As my lips their soft petals meet.

Tired hands have lingered around them,
Dim eyes have given a smile,
And my tears are falling like rain-drops,
For memory is busy the while.

I see a bride at the altar,
I look through the anguish of years,—
A mother, patient and weary,
Toils on as eternity nears.

Toils on through care and oppression,
Toils on as her life ebbs low,
But these flowers, like guardian angels,
Have lighted her sorrows we know.

For they tell of the toil-spent Savior,
Ever ready our burdens to bear,
They tell of His love, all-enduring,
And the crowns the sainted shall wear.

I think that the dear hands so loving,
That have culled these flowers for me
Will find their treasures awaiting
Across the far away sea.

When the fetters of life are all broken,
Tired hands will weary no more,
For she'll stand by the side of the Master,
Gath'ring flowers on the glittering shore.

MAUD BELMONT'S TEST;

—OR,—

HOW SHE SAW HARRY CLEVELAND IN HIS
TRUE CHARACTER.

“My life is cold, and dark, and dreary,
It rains, and the wind is never weary,
My thoughts still cling to the mold’ring past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.”

The preceding stanza was slowly repeated by a girl as she sat by the window of an old-fashioned country school-house watching the dead leaves whirled by the autumn winds.

“Yes, my life is cold and dark and dreary and my thoughts, regardless of all the pride I can summon to my aid, still cling to the moldering past,” she whispered, and heaved a deep sigh as she drew her shawl closer and bowed her head on the rude desk. She took from its hiding place a delicately perfumed note and even then its very fragrance breathed of the false heart that dictated its contents. It ran thus:

“Miss Belmont—I presume our summer’s dream is over, since you can no longer trust me with a good-bye kiss. Please return my ring and letters. Hoping you will soon forget our little flirtation, I am still

“Your friend,

“HARRY CLEVELAND.”

"And it was only a flirtation," she said, as she drew from her finger the ring he had placed there so many months since. There was a hopeless look in her eyes as she remembered the June evening long ago when he asked her to give her heart into his sacred keeping, and placed on her finger the little band of gold and told her that she should be his wife. What a look of scorn supplanted the hopeless expression as she thought of all this! Now she felt tempted to toss it out of the window among the leaves of scarlet, brown and gold, that the sighing winds were whirling in the driving rain! If only the winds would bear the ring away forever!

She put the little golden circlet and all his letters, even the cruel missive last received, together in her desk, locked it, and went to her class, just called, with a calm indifference as if her heart were not breaking all the while. If at noon and recess she did not enter into the children's sports, which she seldom did, she was not missed, for she was what the pupils called a strange, dreamy girl who would rather scribble than play. But hers was a rather gifted nature, and all earth's beauties had for her a language. Maud Belmont's life had been void of that sunshine that fills up the existence of happy children. Orphaned at an early age, she had but faint remembrance of the sweet, pale mother who was ever the angel of her dreams. Her nearest surviving relative was her mother's brother who lived in Colorado. He had written for the child, but she had fallen into the care of her father's uncle and aunt, two old people who were unwilling to give her up. She had lived with no companionship save that of these old people, and what the district school, five months in the year afforded her.

The uncle and aunt were cross-natured and querulous, and failed to appreciate a nature so gifted as Maud's. To her there was music in the sighing winds, the rippling brooks, and the wild bird-notes that came so full of joy, across the meadows. She grew up with a strange longing for something better than she had known, a higher life, a glimpse into that world beyond the great line of blue-capped hills that seemed to shut her in like a prisoner. Her home was a rude log house that stood at the foot of a lofty hill two miles back of the village, Dunmore. She had walked here to school of mornings, and on her return of evenings had done the work for the old people, with only their scoldings and complaints to cheer her and encourage her lonely life. But she was an apt scholar and always bore off the prizes at school above a number of competitors; yet this did not satisfy her cravings for a different life, and the companionship of books.

One day an event transpired that changed the whole current of her being. She had been sent by her aunt to the village to make some purchases. She had walked, as usual, and the exercise and fresh morning air had rouged her cheeks until they vied with the peach blossoms in their pinkish hue. Her eyes were bright and sparkling, and the face that peeped 'neath the blue sun-bonnet was very attractive, or, at least, the new clerk thought so as he stood behind the counter and greeted her pleasantly, asking what he could do for her.

This was an entirely different picture from what she had expected to see, for had she not beheld the gruff old merchant in his accustomed place ever since she could remember? And to see a handsome young man there was as if something magical had occurred. He was

charmed at once with the lovely eyes and fair face of the girl. This was Maud Belmont's and Harry Cleveland's first meeting. With Maud all was changed; life seemed to have new claims on her, and as she wended her way home she sang softly with a glad, happy feeling at her heart.

Mr. Shelton was the only merchant of which Dunmore could boast, and Harry Cleveland was his nephew. Young Cleveland's father was a resident of a distant city and was quite wealthy, but his eldest son Harry had become dissipated, and had been sent to this secluded, rural retreat with the hope that when away from the temptations of city life he would reform. Harry thought for a while that such a life among the hills of Kentucky would be unendurable, but when Maud Belmont's face beamed on him light sprang out of darkness and he thought, after all, that a summer in Dunmore would not be so cheerless. He was twenty-one, and fully acquainted with the ways of society; she was only sixteen, and guileless as an angel. So began our heroine's first dream of love, for now all of Harry Cleveland's leisure hours were spent with her, and side by side they wandered over the hills and valleys, while in her ears rang words of love. After a while she wore his ring (the ring that so many had worn before), and he had told her that some day she should be his wife.

Many glowing descriptions had he given of that far away city home, and she had wondered how she would be received there. And, oh, the bliss that filled her heart at the thought of being ever at his side! Many and many times had their lips met in a kiss of love, and so complete had been her faith in the lover's vows of constancy that not once had she refused him the

boon he always claimed until the visit that proved his last.

On this eventful evening they had wandered here and there gathering flowers until Maud's cheeks were flushed and her eyes shone with the happiness born of love, and she was, indeed, a very queen of beauty.

"Be seated, my lovely queen," Harry said, as he led her to a ledge of rocks; "allow me to crown you," and he placed a garland of autumn's treasures on her head. "Now will my lovely queen bestow on me a kiss?" he said, as he bent low over her blushing face.

"No, Harry," she answered, as she drew away from him. "I cannot; I am not going to kiss you any more until, until—"

"You are my wife?" he asked. "Oh! that may be a long time, and I cannot wait."

"But you will have to wait," she replied; "for I do not believe it is right."

"Oh, you little prude!" he said, "give me my kiss;" and again he bent over her.

"No, I cannot," she persisted, and this time shrank away from him as if in fear: "I am sorry that I ever kissed you."

When she first refused she only meant to try him, but now as he grew more earnest, she felt that she was doing right. But Harry grew very indignant and left her side without a word of good-bye.

She stood watching him across the distant hills with a little tremor of fear lest he would not return; but hope whispered that he was only trying her, and she sat down on the ledge of rocks waiting his return. But he did not come back, and she sat there until the flowers were withered and the long gray shadows began

to fall over the hill tops, and the forest to grow dusky in the waning light; then with a sickening dread she did not understand, she groped her way to the house.

On the following morning the note, to which reference has been made, was placed in her hands. That evening she returned his letters and all mementoes of him, and went home from school with a sadder heart than she had ever known. It seemed that all the dreariness of earth was settling forever on her life, that she had grown, oh, so old since yesterday. But the awakening had come; she now saw Harry Cleveland in his true light, and she felt that it was her good angel that had prompted her to test his love. But so many changes came into her life in the few days that followed that the remembrance of this was as recalling something way in the past; for when she reached home that evening she found a stranger awaiting her, and it was none other than her uncle who had so long wished to adopt her.

How much, he thought, she was like the sister he had loved and lost, and when he clasped her in his arms and called her his own little girl, she knew she had at last anchored at home. He had come to break her bonds, she thought. And though her old uncle and aunt knew they must now relinquish all claims to their little working girl, still it was with some degree of unwillingness.

Maud was not long in packing her scant wardrobe, and the following morning, with her dear uncle, Dr. Worthington, she was en route for Denver, Colorado. What a world of beauty spread out before her vision when she had passed beyond the chain of hills which encircled her home, and which she had seen ever since she could remember, the first thing of a morning and the last thing at night! But now she had passed safely be-

yond these barriers, and drank in the glories of the outer world. The broad acres of farm lands, dotted here and there with beautiful groves and elegant houses, the immense stretches of forests, the streams and rivers spanned with bridges, the villages and cities, and, at last, the towering mountains, hiding their snow-capped summits in misty cloud-land, all these held her enchanted.

Dr. Worthington, though he did not know of the barren life to which his sister's child had been subjected, determined to spare nothing that would conduce to her happiness. He was wealthy and childless; and his wife, one of the best of women, gave Maud a welcome home that she could not very soon forget.

Three years have rolled by and the orphan niece has fully repaid the loved uncle and aunt for the money they have lavished upon her. She has made rapid progress in her studies, and has been graduated with the highest honors. So we find her at nineteen a reigning belle with many admirers.

The pang at her heart has long since passed away, and she thinks of the affair with Harry Cleveland as only a girlish fancy, a passing summer's dream, for a deeper, purer love now fills her cup, and, to-night, as she puts the finishing touches to her toilette, she thinks of him whose diamond glitters on her finger; then her thoughts wander to Dunmore, and to that little gold band that once made earth like heaven seem. She laughs scornfully as she thinks how foolish she was to grieve for such a being as Harry Cleveland.

Radiantly beautiful she enters the parlor, for this is her birthday, and a reception has been given in her honor. Later in the evening Allen Barrett, her lover, stood by her side and said:

"I have an old school-mate present to night, allow me to introduce him," and ere Maud Belmont was aware, she stood face to face once more, with the idol of her first girlish dreams. There was a mutual recognition, and after a few moments' conversation, Allen Barrett left them together.

Soon Harry led Maud out on the veranda; standing in the moonlight, he again told her of his love, and when Maud laughed mirthlessly, he said:

"You have forgotten me, Maud, you love me no more. Could you not remember me a few brief years?"

"And why should I remember you?" she asked. "Do you not see this ring on my finger? That says I am soon to be the wife of a man loyal and true, one who has my whole heart, and will never desert me. Why should I remember that summer's dream? Surely, Mr. Cleveland forgets that it was 'only a flirtation;' " and with that she left his side, while Allen Barrett met her at the door and linking her arm in his they went down the broad walk, and she told him when and where she had known Harry Cleveland.

Allen Barret and Maud Belmont were happily married. Harry Cleveland became a resident of Denver, and Maud never sees him but she thanks her good fortune for the test that led her to see him in his true character.

THE LONE GRAVE IN THE SOUTH.

SONG AND CHORUS.

Far away 'neath Southern skies
Where snowy magnolias bloom,
I've laid away my dearest hopes
In the cold and silent tomb
Flowers deck that lowly mound,
The birds a requiem sing,
While rambling zephyrs come and go,
As they sweet incense bring.

CHORUS—

In fancy I am once again,
With visions of my youth,
And oft in dreams I'm kneeling by
The lone grave in the South,
And oft in dreams I'm weeping by
That lone grave in the South.

The ivy twines its tendrils round
The stones so cold and white,
The orange lends its sweet perfume
To the sad and silent night.

The gleaming stars look softly down
On the scene so calm and still,
The pale moon sheds her mellow rays
O'er valley and o'er hill.

CHO.

In fancy I am once again,
With visions of my youth,
And oft in dreams I'm kneeling by
The lone grave in the South,
And oft in dreams I'm weeping by
That lone grave in the South,

Like funeral palls, the long gray moss
Hangs from the branches low,
The wailing winds moan drearily
As they sway it to and fro,
The murmuring waves sing a lullaby
O'er the cradle of the deep,
As if to still the ocean's roar
Into a quiet sleep.

CHO.

In fancy I am once again,
With visions of my youth,
And oft in dreams I'm kneeling by
The lone grave in the South.
And oft in dreams I'm weeping by
That lone grave in the South.

The sunshine comes with golden light,
And sparkling dew drops stay
In flower cups so soft and sweet,
Where straying sunbeams play.

Fond mem'ry lingers near that grave
O'er which I sadly weep,
While angels from a distant shore
Their constant vigils keep.

CHO.

In fancy I am once again,
With visions of my youth,
And oft in dreams I'm kneeling by
The lone grave in the South.
And oft in dreams I'm weeping by
That lone grave in the South.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

“ ’Twas night in the beautiful city,
The famous and wonderful city,
The proud and magnificent city—
The Queen of the North and the West.”

Coldly the stars looked down on the beautiful snow enshrouding the city, and the full moon lent her silvery sheen to the icy glitter on turret and spire; but there was warmth within the stately buildings and there was happiness around many a fireside. It was Christmas Eve and lights gleamed in the spacious halls as heralds of the coming holiday. There was life and merriment in the quick step and rude jest, while “Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!” was heard above the din until a thousand voices were echoing the joyful sound.

“My God, such a night!” and a woman thinly clad bearing a child in her arms, drew her tattered shawl closer and trudged on through the dense crowd and piercing wind. Sometimes she was pushed off the sidewalk by the jeering mass; again the way must be given for the light hearted belles and beaux of bon ton society. No one heeded the weary pilgrim, for the cities are filled to overflowing with the poverty stricken and crime

stained. She gathered the child closer to her bosom as she pressed onward, for it was numb with cold and a heavy slumber was stealing over it. Already she had bared her own shoulders to the wintry blast and wrapped the infant in her tattered shawl.

"Great heavens! must we die together to-night?" muttered the woman as she stood half in the shadow, leaning against one of the massive columns of a lofty structure. "I cannot travel much further, sweet child, and where we shall find rest for our tired limbs I know not. It is hard to perish in this beautiful city, and yet we are denied even a shelter. It must be retribution hunting me down for my great sin, but I never meant to wrong thee. All day have I wandered over the snow clad prairie, sometimes almost run over by the reckless engine, sometimes almost buried in snow drifts by the sweeping winds. I thought revenge was sweet, but alas! this is my revenge—to die in sin-cursed Chicago, away from the tent fires and the home scenes I loved so well."

A light across the street smiled invitingly at her, and rallying all her strength she essayed to get admittance there.

"Carlton," she read on the door-plate. "It is the very place." Nervously clutching the bell she sank half fainting on the door steps as the servant answered the summons. The inanimate form was carried in and restoratives soon brought back the flickering flame of life. Shelter and food were given her for the night, and in the morning, like all her race, she had folded her tent and silently stolen away leaving the child asleep in its innocence. Mrs. Burman, the housekeeper, thought she never saw a prettier picture as she gazed at the

sleeping infant with its long flowing curls and silken eye-lashes. She thought of her own wee darling laid away to rest not many months since, and this little stray lamb touched a tender cord in the woman's heart. She hoped Mr. Carlton would not send it away, for it was just what he needed to brighten his life. She contrasted the fair face with the dark features of the pauper in whose bosom it had nestled, and she thought after all there must have been some remnant of the mother still in that woman's heart, for she had bared her own form to the wintry blasts that she might protect her child. Then Mrs. Burman left the little girl to her dreams.

It was Christmas day, and a man muffled in furs sat at a window in one of the palace cars speeding on toward Chicago. The wind whirled the snow-flakes in eddying gusts, but the great engine with panting breath and gleaming nostrils moved on with its precious cargo of human souls. The man looked over the barren waste and thought how much it was like his life. Having buried his father in sunny France he had hastened home to clasp to his heart once more his fondly loved wife, but alas! he could find no trace of her. For three years he had been haunting different cities peering into every feminine face in the hope of finding the one dearer than all the world beside. Last Christmas it was New York city he wandered hopelessly over, this time it was St. Louis, and he was going home from a search more fruitless than ever. Night had again settled over the city, and with a sigh of relief Phil Carlton entered his home out of the wind and the snow. A cheerful fire burned in the grate, his dressing gown lay on his easy chair and his slippers were drawn up in their accustomed place. In one corner sat a little girl about four years of age

gazing into the fire as if in deep thought. She looked up in amazement at the intruder, and he wondered if she were a spirit come to mock him with the bitter past.

"Who are you?" he asked.

Going to his side she looked up into his face with perfect trust and answered:

"I am Bonnie."

"Bonnie who?"

"Just Bonnie, that's all."

Mr. Carlton having seated himself she climbed up into his lap and nestled her golden head on his bosom.

"Bonnie," he repeated. Ah! how that name carried him back to other days, and he felt that this Bonnie was sent to cheer his lonely life.

Mrs. Burman found them a few moments later and knew that the child had anchored at home and would not be sent away.

Phil Carlton's life had been a checkered scene, with very little happiness to gild its outlines. He had indulged in bright dreams of the future and a portion of them had been realized only to be blighted when fast approaching their consummation. The only son of a doting father, reared in the lap of wealth, with every wish of his heart gratified, he bade fair to become a man of promise. Perhaps his early days would have been crowned with success had he but known the sweet influence of a mother's love. But he was deprived of this boon at an early age, and his father anticipating all his wants left him to the dictates of his own will. He was early sent to college, and for a while made rapid progress. But, alas, he soon learned the vices of the world and night after night he was at the gaming table, staking and losing. Here he became involved in a ser-

ious difficulty, and was either forced to bear the disgrace of expulsion or to leave the town. He chose the latter, and falling in with a band of gypsies spent a few months in their encampment. While here he was seized with a slow fever, and it was to a dark-eyed gypsy girl they called Elfa, that he owed his life. She nursed him back to health and he knew that the soft touch of the maiden's hand upon his brow, and the love-lit eyes bent earnestly upon him meant more than friendship. A sense of gratitude that he mistook for love pervaded his heart, and without premeditation he offered her his hand in marriage. No sooner had he done so than he fully realized the repulsiveness of a marriage with a gypsy. The words of Tennyson came ringing through his brain:

"I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious
gains!
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower
pains,

"Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or
clime?
I the heir of all ages, in the foremost files of time?"

Would the day ever come when he could introduce her into society, or must he forever wander aimlessly through life with a band of gypsies? Mated with a squalid savage! The very thought was maddening. He saw no way out of the dilemma but to seize the earliest opportunity to make his escape. This he carried into execution, and ere the morning sun had risen was on a train westward bound. Arriving at a small village called Oakland, he was fortunate enough to procure employment as a clerk in a dry-goods store. Like the prodigal son he sought his father's forgiveness and was soon restored to favor. It was during his stay here that love flitted across his pathway, awakening an am-

bition that had lain dormant, creating within him higher hopes and loftier aims. The ideal of his dream was a beautiful girl with all of Nature's adornments and as pure as she was beautiful. Again there were barriers in his way. She was poor and he knew his father would never consent to their union, for already the match-making old man had selected an heiress to be the bride of his son. Left entirely to the dictates of his own will when a child, in manhood he could not be controlled in a matter that lay so near his heart, so he persuaded the charming Bonnie Dundee to a secret marriage and for a brief while they lived happily together in wedded bliss. Then a cloud cast its shadow where before had been naught but sunshine. A telegram came summoning Phil to the bedside of his father. It was with gloomy forebodings that he wended his way this evening toward Widow Dundee's cottage, and the lights gleaming on the distant hills from a gypsy encampment brought back visions of Elfa and that autumn in the Maumee valley. A figure glided across his pathway and he caught the low, distinct words—"I'll be revenged."

Were those words intended for him? and what did they mean? As if in answer to his interrogation came from out the woodlands the soft, sweet, wierd notes of a man's voice singing:

"She brings me joy, she brings no woe,
She lingers ever by my side;
She brings me all the bliss I know—
Does Elfa sweet, my gypsy bride."

There was sadness in the sighing winds and waving branches surrounding the little cottage, but there was a light in the window and someone waited at the door for him.

“ ’Tis sweet to know there’s an eye will mark our coming and grow brighter when we come.” And Phil Carleton bent down and kissed the rosy lips of her he loved.

“I am the bearer of sad news, Bonnie,” he said, and threw himself on a rustic seat on the veranda.

“What is it, Phil?” she asked as she sat down beside him and leaned her head against his shoulder.

“I have come to say good-bye, little wife, but I hope it will be only for a short while. I have just received a telegram saying that my father is very ill and that I must come immediately.”

“Oh, Phil! how can I bear to have you leave me? All the afternoon I have had a presentiment that something would transpire to bring sorrow to my heart. I fear you will never come back.”

“Do not indulge in such thoughts, darling. Nothing but death shall prevent my return. I wish you could accompany me, but it is not best now. It is train time and I must bid you adieu. I will write often and I hope my letters will help to break the monotony of your lonely life.”

With eyes dewy with tears and lips wet with kisses, she stood in the doorway and watched his receding form, little dreaming when and where they would meet again.

The first letter brought a sad blow to her heart. Phil’s father had passed the crisis of his disease but the physician urged an immediate trip to Europe, lest he should never regain his health; and Phil must accompany him. She must keep up a brave heart; he would return as soon as his father’s health would admit—meanwhile he hoped to reconcile the old gentleman to their union, but it would not do to speak of it now.

Bonnie was very white when she read this letter. A trip to Europe! Why, the very thought almost took away her breath. Did he not know—could he not guess what might take place in all that time? and where would be her good name?

Ere long a letter came to Mrs. Dundee from her brother, who several years before had gone West, and having accumulated an immense fortune, had settled in St. Louis. He had recently been bereaved of his wife, and being all alone, wanted his sister to come and live with him. Here they found refuge, a friend and protector.

No news had come from Phil since he had sailed and Bonnie's heart was aching for a sight of the face and a sound of the voice that she loved so well. A year had gone by and still no tidings from the absent one. O how she wished that he would come and clasp in a father's embrace the babe that was now by her side. But time grew gray with watching and waiting, and in bitter anguish she wept over the child that she feared would never know a father's love. Each day the little one grew in love and beauty, bringing joy and comfort to the mother's heart. The image of her absent husband was portrayed in every lineament of its face; and this kept him always fresh in her memory. She had something to live for now, and the bright face of her little girl seemed to buoy her up and inspire her with new hope. It was not only a source of joy to its mother, but to each member of the household. The sound of its little pattering feet and prattling tongue fell on its mother's ear like the rich tones of an Æolian harp. But only too soon her idol was snatched from her, and she realized the full import of the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

One balmy evening in summer, weary of the dust and turmoil of the city, accompanied by her mother and child, she went out to La Fayette park. They had wandered here and there admiring its beauties until the natural bridge was reached. By this time the little feet were tired, for she had persisted in walking a great deal of the way. They sat down to rest and the child fell asleep. Placing her on one of the rustic seats, they went down to the lakelet. Charmed with the little silver-sides sporting in and out among the water lilies, they stayed longer than they had intended, and when they returned the little girl was nowhere to be seen. Detectives were set to work and every means of restoration employed, but all to no purpose, for nothing came to solve the mystery nor could any clue be gained. Day after day found the almost frantic mother watching and waiting for some news of her darling, but years came and years went by and still she was childless.

All this time her uncle's health had been failing, and very soon he was called to meet with death. Like a soldier who had fought valiantly and grown old in war, he lay down his arms and went resignedly to meet his God. After the burial was over it was found that he had bequeathed his vast estate to Bonnie and her mother. More than ever, the faithful wife wished for her husband's return, for there were no barriers now, she thought.

Though Bonnie had grown older and sadder, still there were traces of beauty lingering in the sweet face, and it was impossible for one as lovely as she to remain long in obscurity, consequently she was courted by belles, beaux, and managing mammas until she grew sick of society and its false glitter. Many wooers came, but she

repulsed them all save one. Dr. Roy Monford had been her uncle's physician and she had been thrown much in his society, consequently a strong friendship sprang up between them, and with him it had ripened into love. There were traits in his character that she admired, but how could she love him when the memory of Phil, whom she now mourned as dead, was ever present with her. Yet after all we are controlled by circumstances, and these turned the scales in Roy's favor. Bonnie saw that her mother's health was growing delicate, and, if she was called from earth who in all the world could fill her place? She would indeed, be alone, and in all the years to come she saw nothing to brighten her future. When she should begin to descend the hill of life and saw only sunset rays, on whose strong arm could she lean? Would she not need a friend and protector? And who was better suited to fill that void in her life than Dr. Montford? He loved her fondly, devotedly, and offered her his hand and his fortune. She hesitated, but with her mother's persuasive voice ringing in her ears, finally consented, and an early day was set for the marriage.

Ten years have come and gone, and Phil Carlton's adopted child has become all the world to him. "She is standing now with trembling feet, where the brook and river meet." Childhood has been past and girlhood sits like a queen upon her brow. Carlton has spared no pains on her, and she is prepared to adorn any society. This evening we find her where she sat ten years ago, gazing into the fire. Phil comes in and breaks into her reverie.

"Of what is my little girl thinking?" he asks as he lovingly strokes her hair.

"I was thinking of what Mrs. Burman told me. She says it is just ten years ago to-night since I was left here by a beggar. I was wondering if it was my mother, and where she is to-night. Oh! I wish I were your child sure enough, papa. What if that beggar woman should come to claim me?—it would kill me to leave you."

"Do not brood over troubles of that kind, my Bonnie, for you shall never leave me. I—"

There was an impatient ring at the door-bell.

"Who can it be," he wonders, as he answers the call.

"You are wanted on Deadman's Alley, No. 2226. A woman is dying and has something of importance to communicate to you. I will be your guide as there is no time to lose."

They were soon in a cab and driving rapidly toward the gloomy street. Reaching the place they went up a narrow flight of steps. They were met at the door by an old woman, who showed them to the bedside of the dying. Phil Carlton held up his lantern and its rays fell full upon the face of the miserable creature before him. He started back with a cry of horror, saying:

"It is Elfa, the gypsy."

"Yes," she answered, "you see before you the wreck of what Elfa once was; and you, Phil Carlton, will have your sins to answer for, for you have helped to make me what I am. You have forgotten how I nursed you through the long, weary days of your illness and did everything a fond heart could do to alleviate your sufferings. I loved you, and after I had promised to be

your bride you deserted me. Our race is not like yours, we hold a vow too sacred to be broken; with us a wrong strikes deep and is not soon forgotten. Bonnie Dundee came between us, and oh, how I hated her gentle face; and how I determined to be revenged. You and Bonnie would have been reunited years ago but for me. A demon seemed to possess me and I gloried in the sorrow I had wrought. I allowed her to pine day after day for the husband and child of which I had robbed her."

"My child?" asked Carlton; "what do you mean, woman? Tell me, in God's name if they are living and where I can find them."

"Be patient and listen," she answered; "I had money and I bribed the clerk of the Oakland post-office, who loved money better than honor, and he gave me every letter you wrote your wife after you sailed to Europe. Here they are if you doubt my word." And she handed him the well known letters, which, if they had reached their destination would have spared all this trouble. "I have followed both your paths and have exulted over your disappointments. I stole her child and yours when she loved it most and for years she has mourned its loss. But I have done one good deed, will not the Great Spirit forgive the others?"

She half arose, and with a wild questioning look, sank back almost exhausted. Faintly she whispered:

"Yes, there's one good deed put to my account, while I wronged the mother I righted the father. I carried the child to your door and you have raised your own. Here is proof of this also, I took it from around the child's neck." And she handed him a locket. He opened it, and it revealed the pictures of himself and wife.

“Thank heaven! she is indeed ours. And I can forgive all as I hope to be forgiven, Elfa, if you only tell me where to find my poor, wronged wife.”

“Ah! that is the saddest part of all. She has long believed you dead, and will be married to-morrow night at the second Baptist church in St. Louis.”

He stayed to hear no more. Driving home like a madman he rushed in and broke the strange news to his daughter. They soon made ready for their trip to St. Louis. But unavoidable delay awaited them. A heavy snow storm had come and flakes were falling thick and fast. After two hours travel the road became so blocked that it was with difficulty the train moved at all. They reached a station and made a full stop. It was impossible to go farther. Another engine was telegraphed for, but it did not reach them until the following evening. By this time Phil's impatience had grown to a fever heat. But it was useless to fret, he had to submit to his fate. Just as night began to bring out the stars they drew up at the great union depot. Procuring a cab he said to the driver:

“To the second Baptist church; any amount if you drive for life.”

He heard the distant chime of bells, as faster and faster the cab flew on. Already the crowd had assembled, and should Phil Carlton, like Enoch Arden, look on his love but to lose her? He had braved every danger, he had suffered the agonies of death and she was his by all the laws of God. He would have her or die in the attempt. The minister had just commenced the ceremony when a pale, distinguished looking man entered, accompanied by a beautiful girl.

“Hold!” he said, as he drew near the altar.

"By what right, sir?" inquired the minister.

"The right of a lawful husband," and he stopped in front of the pair. He held out his arms, saying, "Bonnie, have you no word of welcome?"

"O! Phil," she said as she recognized his voice, "my darling, my long lost husband, have you indeed come back to me?" and she fell fainting in his arms. The crowd dispersed, wondering over the strange scene, while Bonnie was conveyed home by husband and friends. She soon recovered, and when she found not only her husband, but her long lost daughter also, she felt that it was indeed a happy Christmas, and one long to be remembered, for it brought to her two priceless treasures.

A few days later Phil Carlton, his wife and daughter, and Mrs. Dundee were en route for Chicago. And now there is no happier man than Phil in his elegant home, surrounded by his loving family.

What of Dr. Roy Montford? He was not to be defeated, but he made several trips to Chicago, and rumor says will soon bring home a Bonnie bride--none other than Phil Carlton's accomplished daughter.

After many years all the barriers have been removed, disappointments have gone by, and though enjoying the sweets of life they feel that they have been purified by suffering and are better prepared for that home "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

LITTLE FOOTSTEPS COME NO MORE.

Over all a sadness lingers,
In the sunshine, in the leaves,
In the bosom of the flowers,
In the sighing of the breeze.
'Tis a sadness born of anguish,
And we long for days of yore
As through blinding tears we whisper—
“Little footsteps come no more.”

CHO.

Little footsteps that we cherished
Echo on the sunlit shore,
Now our home is sad and broken—
Little footsteps come no more.
Through the days so long and dreary,
And the hours' pulseless beat,
We are waiting, wishing, yearning,
For the sound of little feet,
But they come no more to cheer us
As in happy days of yore,
And through tears we sadly whisper—
“Little footsteps come no more.”

CHO.

Little footsteps that we cherished
Echo on the sunlit shore,
Now our home is sad and broken—
Little footsteps come no more.

But this darkness will be lifted
From our hearts whereon it lies
When we meet our little darling
Far beyond the sunny skies,
And we'll clasp her to our bosom,
Clasp her as in days of yore,
Then with rapture we will whisper—
“Little footsteps come once more.”

CHO.

Little footsteps, fondly cherished,
Echo on the sunlit shore,
And with rapture we will whisper—
“Little footsteps come once more.”

LITTLE ROBERT.

The pearly gates stood ajar one day when an angel left God's presence and poised his tiny feet within our home. We took him in our arms, into our hearts, and gazing into his soft blue eyes we called him Robert. A few brief months—almost a year, he lingered with us, brightening our home, growing into our very lives, and as we clasped him to our bosom, filling our hearts with higher, holier purposes, his beautiful eyes had the imprint of Heaven stamped within their liquid depths, as if God, when he led him to the crystal bars had left a good-bye kiss on the ruby lips, and a long, lingering farewell look in his eyes, that he might know his lamb when he called him home. Alas, the summons came all too soon. Just as he was learning to lisp "Papa," and to hold out his little hands to mamma, just as his merry laughter made sweetest music in our household, and just as he learned to put up his rosebud mouth for the morning kiss, the messenger came.

Oh! the darkness, the dreariness, the desolation of that hour when I knew that the angel of death had come for my boy, my beautiful boy. I clasped my babe in my arms and tried to instill warmth into the icy form. But, alas! the sweet spirit had gone back to God who gave it, and in my great anguish I clasped to my heart only little dead Robert.

The long silken lashes lay on the marble cheeks, and the frozen lids hid forever from my view the eyes of my beautiful boy. Death had entered our home and in the cold dark waters little's Robert's hand had slipped from my grasp, and in our darkened parlor the little white-robed form lay in the tiny coffin. There is an empty cradle in our home to-day; there are empty arms and empty hearts, little dresses and little shoes all unused. No gentle blue-eyed babe to watch wistfully for mamma's coming; and oh! the hours, days, weeks and months of a mother's weary waiting and longing for the voice forever stilled.

There is a little mound in the old-fashioned country grave-yard more priceless to me than jewels. It is the grave of our lost darling, and day after day I bear my floral treasures to decorate that mound, thinking God knows my desolation, and some sweet day when the portals stand ajar to admit my weary soul, He will give me back my angel Robert.

AUTUMNAL PLEASURES.

It is time for the nuts to be ripe in the woods,
The nuts by the old meadow-brook ;
As the fast gliding year brings the season around,
How the children are on the outlook
For persimmons and hick'ry nuts, grapes that hang
high,
As if daring the urchins to climb,
Who, with whoop of wild pleasure are on the war-path,
And with joy are ever on time.
They dare, they defy, as they onward ascend
And the treasures in baskets soon lie,
And their pockets are full, but their stomachs are fuller
As the stains on their lips testify.
The soft moonlight invites them out now for a hunt,
The brown leaves are in heaps on the ground,
And our jubilant heroes are bent on the chase
Until the sly 'possum is found.
In triumph the trophy's borne home from the war,
And tired forms creep stealthily to bed—
On the morrow the envy of half the school-boys
As they tell of the chase they have led.
Soon the birds will be hieing away to the South,
And the corn is full ripe in the field,
And the jolly old farmers are gath'ring in store
The unusual abundance of yield ;

But "the hateful old gap" must be minded, you see,
And the truants are called into play,
So, like sent'nels in war, they sit idly or stand,
And this task must be theirs day by day;
October is fully upon them at last,
And the air is delicious and sweet;
And the forest, abounding in beauties so rare,
Is too tempting for little boys' feet,—
With a skip and a bound he's off on the march,—
The gap is abandoned, in truth;—
Oh, who would not live over childhood again
Only just for the pleasures of youth?

ALMOST HOME.

"Are we almost home, Mamma? I am so tired," said my little boy as his chubby hand clung tremblingly to mine.

"Yes, darling, we are almost home," I answered. "Just beyond the hill yonder where you see the dying sunlight gleaming through the trees, is our home."

"Do you think papa will meet us at the gate?" he asked, with a glad light shining in his soft, brown eyes.

"Yes, and he will take my little, tired Robin in his arms too," I said, as I seated myself on a grassy mound while my little boy nestled his head with its wealth of nut-brown curls on my knee.

It was a beautiful evening in October, and the distant forest with its banners of bronze, gold and scarlet, enveloped in a purplish haze, looked like fairy-land, and all day Robin had begged to go to see the pretty leaves.

We had wandered from place to place gathering autumn's treasures until the sun began to swing low and the shadows to lengthen in the woodland. Robin was weary now and wanted to go home; besides the air was growing chill and the winds sighed mournfully through the dim forest. Off we started at a brisk pace and I led the little fellow up the towering hill. When the top was reached he clapped his little hands and shouted:

"Home! we are almost home." But the long road looked to his childish vision, dark and uninviting, and he drew nearer to me and clung to my hand in a frightened way crying:

"Mamma, please carry me; I'm afraid."

Just then he saw his papa coming to meet us.

"I'm not afraid now," he said as he joyfully rushed to meet him. "Papa will take me home."

Our little Robin contracted a cold by our long stay in the shadowy forest and the following day he lay on a couch of suffering. He grew worse, and as I gazed on the fevered brow and heard him say in delirious tones: "Mamma, I am so tired; aren't we almost home?" I knew that he was again living over that evening, but alas! I also knew that he was nearing the Beautiful Gate, and soon another would meet him and in his arms bear him across the dark rolling river of death. No more on earth would my little darling with me gather beautiful treasures, no more would he grow weary, for Robin was almost home. Through the fields of Paradise he would soon roam; for he was drifting toward the Unseen City with its "glint of gold and gleam of pearls."

The damp dew stood on his brow, and the little hand for a moment clutched the coverlet convulsively; and there was a frightened look in his eyes as I saw that evening when the shadows began to gather in the forest. The sunlight came streaming through the casement, falling on the little brown head and the pale face, lighting it up with heavenly beauty.

"I am almost home," he whispered, and his eyes closed forever on earth. My beautiful boy slept the sleep of death and his spirit had entered the shining portals of the New Jerusalem.

MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

BY

MRS. DAVIS.

The following musical compositions are by the author of Kentucky Folks. The first three are posthumous publications; being copy-rights of 1899, and just lately issued.

They are all regular sheet music size, arranged for the Piano or Cabinet Organ, and the songs have quartette choruses. They are pure in sentiment, harmonious in rhythm, perfect in melody, and are the productions of a high order of genius. The regular publisher's price is given after each title; but purchasers of Kentucky Folks, by mentioning this fact with order, will be supplied at half price, plus one cent per copy for postage, if they order of

H. W. DAVIS,
Providence, Ky.

LIST.

INSTRUMENTAL.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|-----|
| Brass Band March. | - | - | - | 40c |
|-------------------|---|---|---|-----|

VOCAL.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|
| Angels Called You, Sweet Genieve. | - | - | - | 35c |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|

This song beautifully describes the brief career of a lovely young lady, a general favorite, who died at the age of eighteen.

| | | | | |
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| We'll Sail o'er The Sea of Sweet Dreams, Love. | | | | 35c |
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